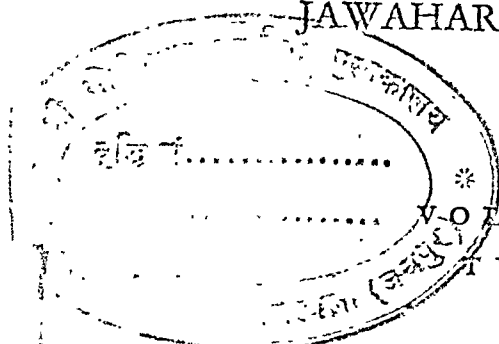


G L I M P S E S . O F
W O R L D H I S T O R Y

BEING FURTHER LETTERS TO HIS DAUGHTER,
WRITTEN IN PRISON, AND CONTAINING
A RAMBLING ACCOUNT OF HISTORY
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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JAWAHARLAL NEHRU



VOLUME

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ALLAHABAD
KITABISTAN
17-A CITY ROAD

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Recent Essays and Writings

Letters from a Father to His Daughter

Whither India?

A Window in Prison and Prison-land

PRINTED BY M. N. PANDEY AT THE ALLAHABAD LAW JOURNAL PRESS,
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A SURVEY OF THE WORLD

November 19, 1932

So Napoleon passed away from the world's stage which he had dominated for so long. More than a hundred years have passed since then and the dust of many an old controversy has settled down. But, as I have told you, people still differ greatly about him. Probably if Napoleon had been born during some other, and more peaceful period, he would have been just a distinguished general and nothing more, and might have passed almost unnoticed. But revolution and change gave him the chance to forge ahead, and he seized it. His fall and passing out of European politics must have come as a great relief to the people of Europe, for they were weary of war. A whole generation had not seen real peace, and they longed for it. None felt the relief more than the kings and princes of Europe, who had trembled at Napoleon's name for many years.

We have spent a long time in France and Europe, and now we are well advanced in the nineteenth century. Let us have a look round the world and see what it was like when Napoleon fell.

In Europe, you will remember, the old kings and their ministers had gathered together at the Congress of Vienna. The bogey-man was gone and they could now play at their old game and settle the fate of millions of human beings at their sweet will and pleasure. It did not matter what the people wanted, nor did it matter what the natural and linguistic boundaries of a country were. The Tsar of Russia, England (represented by Castlereagh), Austria (represented by Metternich), and Prussia were the principal powers; and of course there

was technically in the Turkish Empire, but was semi-independent. Greece revolted against Turkish dominion in 1821, and after eight years of war won its freedom with the help of England, France and Russia. It was in this war that the English poet Byron died as a volunteer fighting for Greece. He has written some very beautiful poems about Greece and perhaps you know some of them.

I might as well mention here of two other political changes that took place in Europe in 1830. France, fed up with the repression and tyranny of the Bourbons, drove them out again. But instead of a republic, another king was chosen. This was Louis Philippe who behaved a little better and more or less as a constitutional king. He managed to reign till 1848, when there was another and a bigger burst-up. In Belgium also there was a revolt in 1830. This resulted in the separation of Belgium and Holland. The big European powers of course strongly disapproved of a republic. So they presented a German prince to Belgium and made him king there. Another German prince was made king of Greece. The many states of Germany always seem to have had an abundance of such princes, to be had whenever a throne was vacant. The English royal house still reigning, you will remember, came from the little state of Hanover in Germany.

The year 1830 was a year of revolts in many other places in Europe also—in Germany and Italy and especially Poland. But the revolts were crushed by the kings. There was a great deal of cruel repression in Poland by the Russians and even the use of the Polish language was forbidden. This year—1830—was a kind of prelude to 1848 which, as we shall see, was a year of revolution in Europe.

So much for Europe. Across the Atlantic, the United States were gradually spreading out towards the West. Far away from European rivalries and wars, and with unlimited land at their disposal, they were making rapid progress and were catching up Europe. In South

America, however, great changes took place. These were indirectly caused by Napoleon. When Napoleon conquered Spain and put a brother of his on the throne there, the Spanish colonies in South America revolted. Thus, strangely enough, it was the loyalty of the Spanish American colonies to the old Spanish dynasty that led them to independence. But this was the immediate excuse. The break would have come anyhow some time later for the party of independence was growing all over South America. The great hero of South American independence was Simon Bolivar, called *El Libertador*, the Liberator. The Republic of Bolivia in South America is named after him. Thus, when Napoleon fell, Spanish America was cut off from Spain and was fighting for independence. The removal of Napoleon made no difference to the struggle and it continued against the new Spain for many years. Some of the European kings wanted to help their brother king of Spain to crush the revolutionaries in the American colonies. But the United States put a final stop to this interference. Monroe was president of the United States then, and he told the European powers that if they interfered anywhere in America, North or South, they would have to fight the United States. This threat frightened the European powers and since then they have more or less kept away from South America. President Monroe's threat to Europe has become famous as the "Monroe Doctrine." It protected the new South American republics from the greed of Europe for a long time and allowed them to grow. They were protected from Europe well enough, but there was no one to protect them from the protector—the United States! To-day the United States dominate over them and many of the smaller republics are completely under their thumb.

The vast country of Brazil was a colony of Portugal. This also became independent about the same time as the Spanish colonies of America. So we find that by 1830 the whole of South America was free of European domination. In North America there was of course the

British colony of Canada.

We come to Asia now. In India the English were now undoubtedly the predominant power. During the Napoleonic wars in Europe the English had consolidated their position and even taken possession of Java. Tippu Sultan in Mysore had been vanquished, and, in 1819, the Maratha power was finally overthrown. In the Punjab, however, there was a Sikh state under Ranjit Singh. All over India the British were creeping on and spreading. In the east Assam was annexed, and Arakan—Burma—remained for the next mouthful.

While Britain spread in India, another great European power, Russia, was spreading in Central Asia. Already it touched the Pacific in the East and China. Now it was rolling down through the petty states of Central Asia right up to the frontier of Afghanistan. The British in India grew afraid of this giant approaching them and in their nervousness provoked a war with Afghanistan without the shadow of an excuse. But they burnt their fingers badly.

China was under the Manchus, suspecting, with good reason, the foreigners who came in the name of trade or religion, and trying to keep them out. But the foreigners continued to shout and misbehave at her gates, and especially encouraged the traffic in opium. The East India Company had the monopoly of the British China trade. The Chinese Emperor prohibited the entry of opium but smuggling continued, and the foreigners carried on an illegal trade in opium. This resulted in a war with England, rightly called the Opium War, and the British forced the Chinamen to take opium.

I told you long ago of the shutting up of Japan in 1634. At the beginning of the nineteenth century it was still closed up to all outsiders. But within its closed borders the old Shogunate was getting weaker, and new conditions were rising which were going to put a sudden end to the old system. Further south, in South-East Asia, European powers were absorbing territory. The

Spanish still held the Philippine Islands. The Portuguese had been driven away by the English and Dutch. The Dutch got back Java and the other islands after the Congress of Vienna. The English were spreading out to Singapore and the Malay Peninsula. Annam, Siam and Burma were still independent, though they paid an occasional tribute to China.

Very roughly this was the political state of the world between the fifteen years from Waterloo to 1830. Europe was definitely coming out as the boss of the world; and in Europe itself reaction was triumphant. The emperors and kings, and even the reactionary Parliament of England, thought that they had finally crushed liberal ideas. They tried to bottle up these ideas. They failed of course and there were repeated revolts.

The political changes seem to dominate the scene. Yet far more important was the great revolution in methods of production and distribution and travel that began with the Industrial Revolution of England. Silently but irresistibly this was spreading in Europe and North America, and was changing the outlook and habits of millions, and the relations between different classes. New ideas were emerging out of the clanging of the machinery, and a new world was being built up. Europe was growing more and more efficient and deadly, more and more greedy and imperialistic and callous. The Spirit of Napoleon seemed to pervade it. But in Europe also were growing up ideas which were destined to fight and overthrow Imperialism.

Also there is the literature and poetry and music of this period, that fascinates. But I must not allow my pen to run on. It has done enough duty for to-day.

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THE HUNDRED YEARS BEFORE THE WORLD WAR

November 22, 1932

Napoleon fell in 1814; he returned from Elba next year and was again defeated, but his system had collapsed in 1814. Exactly a hundred years later, in 1914, began the Great War which spread almost all over the world and, during the four years that it lasted, caused terrible loss and suffering. We shall have to consider this period of a hundred years in some detail. Already, in my last letter, I have tried to give you a rough idea of the world as it was when this period began. It is worth while, I think, for us to have a look at the century as a whole before we examine bits of it in different countries. In this way, perhaps, we shall have a better idea of the main currents during these hundred years, and thus see the wood as well as the trees.

These hundred years from 1814 to 1914 fell, as you will of course notice, very largely in the nineteenth century. We might as well refer to them therefore as the nineteenth century, although this would not be quite accurate.

The nineteenth century is a fascinating period. But the study of it for us is no easy matter. It is a vast panorama, a great picture, and because we are so near to it, it appears to us bigger and fuller than the centuries that preceded it. This bigness and complexity is rather apt to overwhelm us at times as we try to unravel the thousand threads that go to make it up.

It was the century of marvellous mechanical progress. The Industrial Revolution brought in its train the Mechanical Revolution, and machines became more and

more important in man's life. They did a great deal that man had done before, and eased his drudgery, and lessened his dependence on the elements, and produced wealth for him. Science helped greatly, and travel and transport became swifter and ever swifter. The railway came and displaced the stage-coach; the steamship took the place of sailing ship, and then came the great ocean liner, powerful and stately, going from continent to continent with speed and regularity. Towards the end of the century came the automobile, and motor cars spread out all over the world. And lastly came the aeroplane. At the same time man began to control and utilise a new wonder—electricity—and the telegraph and telephone appeared. All this made a vast difference to the world. As the means of communication developed and people travelled faster and faster, the world seemed to shrink and become much smaller. We are used to all this to-day and we seldom think about it. But all these improvements and changes are new-comers in this world of ours; they have all come within the last hundred years.

It was also the century of Europe, or rather of Western Europe, and especially of England. The Industrial and Mechanical Revolutions had begun and progressed there, and they gave a great lead to Western Europe. England was predominant in sea-power and industry but gradually the other countries of Western Europe caught up to it. The United States of America also forged ahead with this new mechanical civilization and railroads carried them westwards to the Pacific, and made the huge country one nation. They were too busy with their own problems and their expansion to trouble themselves much about Europe and the rest of the world. But they were strong enough to resent and prevent any interference from Europe. The Monroe Doctrine, about which I told you in my last letter, preserved the republics of South America from the greed of Europe. These republics are called the Latin republics as they were founded by people from Spain and Portugal. These

two countries, as well as Italy, and partly France also, are called Latin nations. The northern countries of Europe are, on the other hand, Teutonic; England being the Anglo-Saxon branch of the Teutons. And the people of the United States of America originally came from this Anglo-Saxon stock, but of course all kinds of immigrants have gone there since.

The rest of the world was backward industrially and mechanically, and could not compete with the new mechanical civilization of the west. The new machine industries of Europe produced goods far more rapidly and abundantly than the old cottage industries. But to produce these goods raw material was required and much of this was not to be had in Western Europe; and when the goods were produced, they had to be sold and so markets for them were necessary. So Western Europe searched for countries which would provide this raw material and buy the manufactured goods. Asia and Africa were weak, and Europe fell on them like a beast of prey. In the race for empire, England, by virtue of her lead in industry and her sea-power, was easily first.

You will remember that Europeans first went to India and the East to buy spices and other articles in demand in Europe. Thus eastern goods came to Europe and many a product of an eastern handloom came west. But now, with the development of the machine, this process was reversed. The cheaper goods of Western Europe went East, and the cottage industries of India were deliberately killed by the East India Company in order to encourage the sale of English goods.

Europe sat on giant Asia. In the north the Russian Empire sprawled across the whole continent. In the south England had firm hold over the biggest prize of all—India. In the west, the Turkish Empire was going to pieces and Turkey was referred to as the "Sick man of Europe." Persia, nominally independent, was dominated by England and Russia. The whole of South-East Asia—Burma, Indo-China, Malay, Java, Sumatra,

Borneo, Philippines, etc.—was absorbed by Europe, with the exception of a bit of Siam. In the Far East China was being nibbled at by all the European powers and concession after concession was forced out of her. Only Japan stood upright and faced Europe as an equal. She had come out of her seclusion and adjusted herself to the new conditions with remarkable rapidity.

Africa was very backward, except for Egypt. It could offer no effective resistance to Europe and so the European powers fell on it in a mad race for empire and divided up this huge continent. England occupied Egypt for it was on the way to India, and British policy henceforth was dominated by the desire to hold on to India. The Suez Canal was opened in 1869 and this made the journey from Europe to India much shorter; it also made Egypt more valuable to England for Egypt could interfere with the canal and thus controlled the sea-route to India.

So, as a result of the Mechanical Revolution capitalist civilization spread all over the world and Europe was dominant everywhere. And capitalism led to imperialism. So that the century might also be called the century of imperialism. But this new Imperial Age was very different from the old imperialisms of Rome and China and India and the Arabs and Mongols. There was a new type of empire, hungry for raw materials and markets. The new imperialism was the child of the new industrialism. "Trade follows the Flag", it was said, and often enough the flag followed the Bible. Religion, science, the love of one's own country, all were prostituted to one end—the exploitation of the weaker and industrially more backward peoples of the earth, so that the lords of the big machine, the princes of industrialism, might grow richer and richer. The Christian missionary, going in the name of truth and love, was often the outpost of Empire, and if any harm befell him, his country made this an excuse to seize territory and extort concessions.

The capitalist organization of industry and

civilization led inevitably to this imperialism. Capitalism also led to an intensification of the feeling of nationalism, so that you can also call this century the century of nationalism. This nationalism was not merely a love of one's own country but a hatred of all others. From this glorification of one's own patch of land and contemptuous running down of others, friction between different countries and trouble were bound to result. Industrial rivalry and imperial rivalry between different European countries made matters worse. The map of Europe as settled by the Congress of Vienna in 1814-15 was another irritating factor. According to this some nationalities had been suppressed and put forcibly under other people's rule. Poland had disappeared as a nation. Austria-Hungary became an ill-assorted Empire containing all manner of people cordially disliking each other. The Turkish Empire in the south-east of Europe contained many non-Turkish peoples in the Balkans. Italy was split up into many states, and part of it was under Austria. Repeated attempts were made by war and revolution to change this map of Europe. I mentioned some in my last letter, which followed soon after the Vienna settlement. In the second half of the century Italy managed to shake off the Austrian in the north and the Pope's domination in the centre, and became a united nation. This was followed soon after by the unification of Germany under the leadership of Prussia. France was defeated and humiliated by Germany and deprived of two of her frontier provinces, Alsace and Lorraine, and from that day she dreamt of *revanche*, revenge. In less than fifty years there was going to be a bloody and terrible revenge.

England with her great lead was the most fortunate of the European countries. She held all the prizes and was well content with things as they were. India was the model of the new type of Empire, a rich territory from the exploitation of which flowed ceaselessly a river of gold to England. All the other would-be empire-builders envied this possession of India by

England. They sought to build empires elsewhere after this Indian model. The French succeeded in some measure; the Germans came rather late in the field and there was little left for them. So there was political tension all over the world between these 'great Powers' of Europe, each trying to swallow more and more territory and coming up against another engaged in the same process. Between England and Russia especially there was continuous friction, for Russia seemed to threaten England's possession of India from Central Asia. So England was always trying to checkmate Russia. When Russia, in the middle of the century, defeated Turkey and coveted Constantinople, England came down on the side of Turkey and drove Russia back. England did this not for the love of Turkey but for fear of Russia and of losing India.

England's industrial lead gradually grew less and less as Germany and France and the United States crept up to her. By the end of the century matters were coming to a head. The world was too small for the vast ambitions of these European powers. Each feared and hated and envied the other, and this fear and hatred made them increase their armies and their ships of war. There was a feverish competition in these engines of destruction. There were also alliances between different countries to fight others, and ultimately two systems of alliances faced each other in Europe—one was headed by France, to which England also privately adhered, and the other was headed by Germany. Europe became an armed camp. And ever there was fiercer competition in industry and trade and armaments. And a narrow spirit of nationalism was whipped up in each western country, so that the masses might be misled and made to hate their neighbours in other countries, and thus be kept ready for war.

A blind nationalism thus began to dominate Europe. This was strange, for the speeding up of communications had brought different countries closer to each other and many more people travelled. One would have thought

that as people grew to know their neighbours better, their prejudices would lessen and their narrow-mindedness give place to a broader outlook. To some extent this undoubtedly took place, but the whole structure of society under the new industrial capitalism was such that it bred friction between nation and nation, class and class, and man and man.

Nationalism also grew in the East. It took the shape of resistance to the foreigner, who was dominating and exploiting the country. At first the feudal relics in eastern countries resisted foreign domination, because they felt that their position was threatened. They failed as they were bound to do. A new nationalism then arose tinged with a religious outlook. Gradually this religious colouring faded off and a nationalism of the western type emerged. In Japan, foreign domination was avoided, and an intense half-feudal nationalism was encouraged.

Asia began to resist European aggression from the earliest days, but the resistance became half-hearted when the power and the efficiency of the new weapons which the European armies possessed were realised. The growth of science and the mechanical progress made in Europe had made these European armies far more powerful than anything the east had then. Eastern countries therefore felt powerless before them and bowed their heads in despair. Some people say that the East is spiritual and the West material. This kind of remark is very deceptive. The real difference between the East and the West, at the time when Europe came as aggressor in the 18th and 19th centuries, was the medievalism of the East and the industrial and mechanical progress of the West. India and other eastern countries were dazzled at first not only by the military efficiency of the West, but also by their scientific and technical progress. All this combined to give them a feeling of inferiority in regard to military and technical matters. In spite of this, however, nationalism grew, and the desire to resist foreign aggression and turn out the foreigner. Early

in the twentieth century an event occurred which had a great effect on the mind of Asia. This was the defeat of Tsarist Russia by Japan. For little Japan to defeat one of the greatest and most powerful of European powers surprised most people; in Asia the surprise was a most pleasant one. Japan was looked upon as the representative of Asia battling against western aggression and, for the moment, became very popular all over the east. Of course Japan was no such representative of Asia, and she fought for her own hand just like any great power of Europe. I remember well how excited I used to get when news came of the Japanese victories. I was about your age then.

So, as the imperialism of the West became more and more aggressive, nationalism grew in the East to counter it and fight it. All over Asia, from the Arab nations in the West to the Mongolian nations of the far East, national movements took shape, advanced cautiously at first and moderately, and then became more and more extreme in their demands. India saw the beginnings and early years of the National Congress. The revolt of Asia had begun.

Our survey of the nineteenth century is far from over yet. But this letter is long enough and must end.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY CONTINUED

November 24, 1932

I told you in my last letter of some of the distinguishing features of the nineteenth century and of the many things that resulted from the industrial capitalism which took possession of Western Europe after the coming of the big machine. One of the reasons why Western Europe took the lead in this was the possession by it of coal seams and iron ore. Coal and iron were essential for the making and working of the big machines.

This capitalism led, as we saw, to imperialism and nationalism. Nationalism was no new thing; it had existed before. But it became intenser and narrower. At the same time it bound together and separated; those living in one national unit came closer to each other, but they were cut off even more from others living in a different national unit. While patriotism grew in each country, it was accompanied by dislike and distrust of the foreigner. In Europe, the industrially advanced countries glared at each other like beasts of prey. England having got most of the booty wanted naturally to stick to it. But for other countries, notably Germany, there was too much of England all over the place. So friction increased and ended in open fighting. There was no other way out. The whole structure of industrial capitalism, and its off-shoot imperialism, leads to this friction and conflict. Inherent in them there seem to be contradictions which cannot be reconciled, based as they are on conflict and competition and exploitation. Thus in the East, nationalism, child of imperialism, became its bitter enemy.

In spite of these contradictions, however, the capitalist form of civilization taught many a useful lesson. It taught organisation for the big machine and large scale industry require a great deal of organisation before they can function. It taught co-operation in large undertakings. It taught efficiency and punctuality. It is not possible to run big factories or a railway system unless these qualities are present. Sometimes it is said that these qualities are typical Western qualities and the East does not possess them. In this, as in most other matters, there is no question of the East and West. The qualities were developed because of industrialism and the West, being industrialised, possesses them, while the East is still largely agricultural and not industrialised, and hence is lacking in them.

Industrial capitalism performed one other great service. It showed how wealth could be produced by power production, that is with the help of the big machine and coal and steam. The old fear that there was not enough in the world to go round and so there must be vast numbers of poor people, had the bottom knocked out of it. With the help of science and machinery enough food and clothing, and every other thing that was necessary, could be produced for the world's population. The problem of production was thus solved, at least in theory. And yet there it stopped. Wealth was undoubtedly produced abundantly but the poor remained poor and indeed became poorer. In the Eastern and African countries, under European domination, there was of course naked and unashamed exploitation. There was no one to care for the unhappy people who lived there. But even in Western Europe poverty remained and became more and more obvious and widespread. For a while the exploitation of the rest of the world brought wealth to Western Europe. Most of this wealth remained with the few rich people at the top, but a little percolated through to the poorer classes and their standards of living went up a little. Population also increased very greatly.

But much of this wealth and the raising of the standard of living was at the expense of exploited people in Asia, Africa and other non-industrialised areas. This exploitation and flow of wealth hid for a while the contradictions of the capitalist system. Even so the difference between the rich and the poor grew; the distance became greater. They were two different peoples, two separate nations. Benjamin Disraeli, a great English statesman of the 19th century and a novelist, has described them: "Two nations; between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets; who are formed by a different breeding, are fed by a different food, are ordered by different manners, are not governed by the same laws. the Rich and the Poor."

The new conditions of industry brought large numbers of workers in big factories, and so a new class arose, that of the factory worker. These people were different from the peasants and field workers in many ways. The peasant has to rely a great deal on the seasons and the rainfall. These are not under his control and so he begins to think that his misery and poverty are due to supernatural causes. He becomes superstitious and ignores economic causes, and lives a dull, hopeless life, resigned to an unkind fate which he cannot alter. But the factory worker works with machines, things made by man; he produces goods regardless of the seasons and the rainfall; he produces wealth but he finds that this very largely goes to others and he remains poor; to some extent he can see economic laws in action. And so he does not think of supernatural causes and is not so superstitious as the peasant. For his poverty he does not blame the gods; he blames society or the social system and especially the capitalist owner of the factory who takes such a big part of the profits of his labour. He becomes class conscious, and sees that there are different classes and the upper classes prey on his class. And this

leads to discontent and revolt. The first murmurs of discontent are vague and dull; the first uprisings are blind and thoughtless and weak, and they are easily crushed by the government. For the government now wholly represents the interests of the new middle class which controls the great factories and their offshoots. But hunger cannot be crushed for long, and soon the poor worker finds a new source of strength in union with his comrades. So trade Unions arise to protect the worker and fight for his rights. They are secret bodies at first for government will not even permit the workers to organise themselves. It becomes clearer and clearer that the government is definitely a class government, out to protect by all means the class it represents. Laws also are class laws. Slowly the workers gain strength and their Trade Unions become powerful organisations. Different kinds of workers see that their interests are really one as against the exploiting class in power. So different Trade Unions co-operate together and the factory workers of a country become one organised group. The next step is for the workers of different countries to join for they too feel that their interests are common and the enemy is a common one. Thus arises the cry: "Workers of the World Unite", and international organisations of workers are formed. Capitalist industry also grows meanwhile, and becomes international. And so Labour confronts Capitalism, wherever this industrial capitalism flourishes.

I have gone ahead too fast and must go back. But this nineteenth century world is such a jumble of many tendencies, often contradicting each other, that it is difficult to keep them all in view. What will you make, I wonder, of this strange mixture of capitalism and imperialism and nationalism and internationalism and wealth and poverty? But life itself is a strange mixture. We have to take it as it is, try to understand it, and then to better it.

This jumble of misfits made many people in Europe and America think. Early in the century, after Napoleon

fell, there was little liberty in any European country. In some of these countries there was the king's despotism, in some, like England, a small aristocratic and rich class was in power. Everywhere, as I have told you, there was repression of the liberal elements. But in spite of this, the American and the French Revolutions had made the ideas of democracy and political liberty known and appreciated by liberal thinkers. Democracy, indeed, began to be looked upon as the cure for all the ills and troubles of the State and the people. The democratic ideal was that there should be no privilege; every person should be treated by the State as of equal social and political value. Of course people differ greatly from each other in many ways; some are stronger than others, some wiser, some more unselfish. But the believers in democracy said that whatever their differences might be men should have the same political status. And this was to be brought about by giving everyone the vote. Advanced thinkers and liberals believed in the virtues of democracy fervently, and they tried hard to bring it about. The conservatives and reactionaries opposed them and everywhere there was a great tussle. In some countries there were revolutions. England was on the verge of civil war before the franchise was extended, that is votes for electing members to Parliament were given to some more people. Gradually, however, democracy triumphed in most places, till, by the end of the century, most men at least had the vote in Western Europe and America. Democracy had been the great ideal of the nineteenth century, so much so that the century might also be called the century of democracy. Democracy had triumphed in the end, and yet, when this end came people had begun to lose faith in it. They found that it had failed to put an end to poverty and misery and many contradictions of the capitalist system. What was the good of a vote to a man who was hungry? And what was the measure of the liberty he had if his vote or his services could be purchased for the price of a meal? So democracy fell into disrepute, or to be

correct, political democracy went out of favour. But this is outside the scope of the nineteenth century.

Democracy dealt with the political aspect of liberty. It was a reaction against autocracy and other despotisms. It offered no special solution of the industrial problems that were arising, or of poverty, or class conflict. It laid stress on a theoretical freedom of each individual to work according to his bent, in the hope that he would try, from self-interest, to better himself in every way, and thus society would progress. This was the doctrine of *laissez faire*, about which I think I wrote to you in a previous letter. But the theory of individual freedom failed as the man who was compelled to work for a wage was far from free.

The great difficulty that arose under the system of industrial capitalism was this: those who worked and thus served the community were poorly paid, the rewards went to others who did not work. Thus the rewards were divorced from the services. This resulted, on the one hand, in the degradation and impoverishment of those who laboured; and, on the other hand, in the creation of a class who lived, or rather sponged, on industry without themselves working in it or adding in any way to its wealth. It was like the peasantry, who worked on the land, and the zamindar, who profited by their labour, without working on the land himself. This distribution of the fruits of labour was manifestly unjust; what is more so the worker, unlike the long-suffering peasant, felt that it was unjust and resented it; it tended to get worse as time went on. In all the industrialised countries of the West these discrepancies became glaring and thoughtful and earnest people tried to find a way out of the tangle. (Thus arose the set of ideas known as socialism, child of capitalism, and enemy of it, and perhaps destined to supplant it. In England it took a moderate form, in France and Germany it was more revolutionary. In the United States of America the comparatively small population in a vast country had plenty of opportunity for growth and so the

injustices and misery which capitalism brought to Western Europe were not apparent to the same extent for a long time.

In the middle of the nineteenth century there arose a man in Germany who was destined to become the prophet of socialism and the father of that form of socialism which is known as communism. His name was Karl Marx. He was not just a vague philosopher or a professor who discussed academic theories. He was a practical philosopher, and his method was to apply the technique of science to the study of political and economic problems, and thus to find a remedy for the world's ills. "Philosophy", he said, "had hitherto merely set out to explain the world, communist philosophy must aspire to change it." Together with another person, Engels, he issued the "Communist Manifesto" which gave the outline of his philosophy. Later he published a mighty book in German called *Das Kapital* or "Capital", in which he reviewed the world's history scientifically, and showed in what direction society was developing and how this process could be hurried up. I shall not try to explain the Marxian philosophy here. But I should like you to remember that Marx's great book had tremendous influence on the development of socialism, and it is to-day the Bible of Communist Russia.

Another famous book, which came out in England about the middle of the century, and created a great sensation was Darwin's *Origin of Species*. Darwin was a naturalist, that is he observed and studied nature, and especially plants and animals. He showed, with the help of many examples, how plants and animals had developed in nature, how one species had changed into another by a process of natural selection, how simple forms had gradually become more complex. This kind of scientific reasoning was directly opposed to some religious teachings about the creation of the world and the animals and man. There was then a great argument between the scientists and the believers in these

teachings. The real conflict was not so much about facts as about the attitude to life generally. The narrow religious attitude was largely one of fear and magic and superstition. Reasoning was not encouraged and people were asked to believe in what they were told and were not to question why. Many subjects were wrapped up in a mystic covering of sanctity and holiness and were not to be uncovered or touched. The spirit and methods of science were very different from this. For science was curious to find out everything. It would not take anything for granted, nor would the supposed holiness of a subject frighten it away. It probed into everything, and discouraged superstition, and believed only in such things as could be established by experiment or reason.

The spirit of science won in this struggle with a fossilized religious outlook. Most people who thought about these matters had already, even as far back as the eighteenth century, become rationalists. You will remember that I told you of the wave of philosophic thought in France before the Revolution. But now the change went deeper into society. The average educated person began to be affected by the progress of science. He did not perhaps think very deeply on the subject, nor did he know much about science. But he could not help being awed by the pageant of discovery and invention that unfolded itself before him. The railway, electricity, the telegraph, telephone, phonograph and even so many other things came one after the other, and they were all children of the scientific method. They were hailed as the triumph of science. Science was seen, not only to increase human knowledge, but also to increase man's control over nature. It is not surprising that science triumphed and that people bowed down in worship before this all powerful new god. And the men of science of the nineteenth century became very complacent and cock-sure of themselves, and very definite in their opinions. Science has made vast progress from those days half a century ago, but to-day the

attitude is very different from that complacency and cock-sureness of the nineteenth century. To-day the real scientist feels that the ocean of knowledge is a vast and boundless one, and though he seeks to sail on it, he is humbler and more hesitating than his predecessors.

Another notable feature of the nineteenth century was the great progress of popular education in the west. This was opposed with great vigour by many members of the ruling classes, who said that it would make the common people discontented, seditious, insolent and un-Christian! Christianity, according to this, consists in ignorance and a willing obedience to the rich and powerful! But in spite of this opposition, elementary schools were introduced and popular education spread. Like many other features of the nineteenth century, this also was a consequence of the new industrialism. For the big factory and big machine required industrial efficiency and this could only be produced by education. The society of the period was in great need of all kinds of skilled labour; this need was met by popular education.

This wide spread elementary education produced a very large class of literate people. They could hardly be called educated but they could read and write, and the habit of reading newspapers spread. Cheap newspapers came out and had enormous circulations. They began to exercise a powerful influence over people's minds. Often indeed they misled and roused men's passions against a neighbour country and thus led to war. But, in any event, the "Press" definitely became a power to be reckoned with.

Much that I have written in this letter applies chiefly to Europe, and particularly to Western Europe. To North America also it applies to some extent. The rest of the world, Asia, with the exception of Japan, and Africa, were passive and suffering agents of Europe's policy. The nineteenth century was, as I have said, the century of Europe. Europe seemed to fill the picture; Europe occupied the centre of the world's stage. In

the past there had been long periods when Asia dominated Europe. There were periods when the centres of civilization and progress lay in Egypt or Iraq or India or China or Greece or Rome or Arabia. But the old civilizations exhausted themselves and became petrified and fossilized. The vital element of change and progress left them, and life passed on to other regions. It was Europe's turn now, and Europe was all the more dominant because of the progress in communications which made all parts of the world easily and rapidly accessible.

The nineteenth century saw the flowering of European civilization, bourgeois civilization it is called because the bourgeois classes, produced by industrial capitalism, dominated it. I have told you of many of the contradictions and bad points of this civilization. We in India and the East saw these bad points especially and suffered from them. But no country and no people can rise to greatness unless they have something of the stuff of greatness in them, and Western Europe had such stuff in her. And the prestige of Europe rested ultimately not so much on her military power as on the qualities which had made her great. There was an abundant life and vitality and creative power evident everywhere. Great poets and writers and philosophers and scientists and musicians and engineers and men of action were produced. And undoubtedly even the lot of the common man in Western Europe was far better than it had ever been before. The great capital cities—London, Paris, Berlin, New York—became bigger and bigger, and higher and higher went their buildings, and luxury increased, and science offered a thousand ways of lessening human toil and drudgery, and of adding to the comfort and pleasure of life. And life among the well-to-do classes became mellow and cultured, and a certain complacency and self-sufficiency and unctuousness came to them. It seems almost like the pleasant afternoon or evening of a civilization.

So, in the second half of the nineteenth century,

Europe bore a pleasant and prosperous aspect, and it seemed, on the surface at least, that this mellow culture and civilization would endure and progress from triumph to triumph. But if you peeped below the surface, you would see a strange commotion and many an unpleasant sight. For this prosperous culture was largely meant for the upper classes of Europe only, and it was based on the exploitation of many countries and many peoples. You would see some of the contradictions that I have pointed out, and the national hatreds and the grim and cruel face of imperialism. You would not then be so sure about the permanence or charm of this nineteenth century civilization. (The outside body was fair enough, but there was a canker in the heart; there was a great deal of talk of health and progress, but decadence was eating at the vitals of this bourgeois civilization.)

The crash came in 1914. After four and a quarter years of war, Europe emerged indeed but with terrible wounds which have not been healed yet. But of that I shall have to tell you afterwards.

Everything comes to an end if you are patient enough! And so, my dear, even this long survey of the hundred years, from Napoleon's fall to the World War, has come to an end and the last line is being written. You can take some consolation from the fact that it might indeed have been longer. I have had to control myself greatly!

WARS AND REVOLT IN INDIA

November 27, 1932

We have had a good long survey of the nineteenth century. Let us now look more closely at certain parts of the world. We shall begin with India.

I told you some time back of how the British triumphed over their rivals in India. The French were definitely eliminated during the Napoleonic wars. The Marathas, Tippu Sultan in Mysore, and the Sikhs in the Punjab, held the British for a while. But they could not resist them for long. The British were obviously the strongest and best-equipped power. They had better weapons and better organization, and, above all, they had sea-power to fall back upon. Even when defeated, as they often were, they were not eliminated as they could draw upon other resources owing to their command of the sea routes. For the local powers, however, defeat often meant a disaster which could not be remedied. The British were not only the better equipped fighters and the better organizers, but were also far cleverer than their local rivals and took every advantage of their mutual rivalries. So inevitably the British power spread and the rivals were knocked down one by one, and often with the help of others whose turn to go down came next. It is surprising how shortsighted these feudal chieftains of India were at the time. They never thought of uniting against the foreign enemy. Each fought a lone hand and lost, and deserved to lose.

As the British power grew in strength it became more and more aggressive and truculent. It made war with or without excuse. There were many such wars. I do not propose to weary you with an account of them.

Wars are not pleasant subjects and far too much importance is paid to them in history. But the picture will be incomplete if I do not say something of them.

I have already told you of two wars between Haider Ali of Mysore and the British. Haider Ali was largely successful in these. His son, Tippu Sultan, was a bitter enemy of the British. It took two more wars, in 1790—92 and 1799, to put an end to him. Tippu died fighting. Near Mysore city you can still see the ruins of his old capital, Seringapatam.

The Marathas remained to challenge British supremacy. There was the Peshwa in the West and Scindia of Gwalior and Holkar of Indore and some other chiefs. But the Maratha power went to pieces after the death of two great statesmen Mahadaji Scindia of Gwalior who died in 1794, and Nana Farnavis, minister of the Peshwa, who died in 1800. Still the Marathas took a lot of beating and there were British defeats before the final overthrow of the Marathas in 1819. The Maratha chiefs were defeated separately, each watching the other go down without helping. Scindia and Holkar became dependent rulers acknowledging the suzerainty of the British. The Gaikwar of Baroda had even previously come to terms with the foreign power.

Before taking leave of the Marathas I should like to mention one name which has become famous in Central India. This is the name of Ahalya Bai, a ruler of Indore for thirty years from 1765 to 1795. She was a young widow of thirty when she came to the *gaddi* and she succeeded remarkably well in administering her State. Of course she did not observe *pardah*! The Marathas have never done so. She attended to the business of the State herself, sat in open durbar, and raised Indore from a village to a wealthy city. She avoided wars and kept peace and made her State prosperous, at a time when the greater part of India was in a state of turmoil. It is not surprising that she is still considered a saint and is revered in Central India.

A little before the last Maratha war, the British had

a war with Nepal from 1814 to 1816. They had great difficulties in the mountains but they won in the end, and this district of Dehra Dun, where I sit in prison writing this letter, and Kumaun and Naini Tal came under British rule. You may perhaps remember my telling you, in a letter on China, of the amazing exploit of a Chinese army which crossed Tibet and walked over the Himalayas and beat the Gurkhas in their homeland, Nepal. This was only 22 years before the British-Nepal War. Ever since Nepal has formally acknowledged China's suzerainty. I do not know if it still does so or not. It is a peculiar country, very backward, very much cut off from the rest of the world, and yet, from all accounts, a delightfully situated place, full of natural wealth. It is not a dependent state like Kashmir or Hyderabad. It is called independent, but the British people see to it that this independence is kept within bounds. And the brave and warlike people of Nepal—the Gurkhas—are enrolled in the British army in India and are used to keep down Indians.

In the east Burma had spread right up to Assam. So there was bound to be conflict with the ever-advancing British. There were three wars with Burma, each time the British annexing some territory. The first war in 1824—26 resulted in Assam coming under the British; in the second war, in 1852, South Burma was annexed. North Burma, with the capital at Ava near Mandalay, was completely cut off from the sea and left high and dry, at the mercy of the British. The end came in 1885 when there was a third Burma War, and the whole of the country was annexed by the British and joined on to the British Empire. But Burma was in theory a vassal of China; and indeed it used to send tribute regularly. It is curious to note that the British, when annexing Burma, agreed to continue this tribute to China. This shows that even in 1885 they were sufficiently impressed by the power of China, although China was so involved in her own troubles that she could not help her vassal when Burma was invaded. The British paid the tribute to

China once after 1885 and then discontinued it.

The Burma Wars have taken us to 1885. I wanted to deal with them all together. But now we must go back to North India and to an earlier part of the century. In the Punjab a great Sikh State had risen under Ranjit Singh. Right at the beginning of the century Ranjit Singh became master of Amritsar. By 1820 he was master of nearly the whole of the Punjab and Kashmir. He died in 1839. The Sikh State weakened and began to break up soon after his death. The Sikhs illustrate the old maxim that one rises in adversity and falls after success is attained. It was not possible even for the later Mughals to suppress the Sikhs when they were a hunted minority group. But with political success, the very foundations of success were weakened. There were two wars between the British and the Sikhs, the first in 1845-46 and the second in 1848-49. During the second there was a severe defeat of the British at Chilianwala. In the end, however, the British triumphed completely and the Punjab was annexed. It may interest you to know—because you are a Kashmiri—that Kashmir was sold by the British to a certain Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu for about seventy-five lakhs of rupees. It was a bargain for Gulab Singh! The poor people of Kashmir of course did not count in the transaction. Kashmir is now one of the states dependent on the British. The present Maharaja there is a descendant of Gulab Singh.

Further to the north, or rather north-west of the Punjab, lay Afghanistan and not far from Afghanistan, on the other side, were the Russians. The spread of the Russian Empire in Central Asia upset the nerves of the British. They were afraid that Russia might attack India. Almost right through the nineteenth century there was talk of the "Russian menace." As early as 1839 the British in India made an entirely unprovoked attack on Afghanistan. At that time the Afghan Frontier was far from British India and the independent Sikh State of the Punjab intervened. None the less

the British marched to Kabul, making the Sikhs their allies. But the Afghans took signal revenge. However backward they may be in many respects, they love their freedom and will fight to the last to preserve it. And so Afghanistan has always been a "hornet's nest" for any foreign army that invaded it. Although the British had occupied Kabul and many parts of the country, suddenly there were revolts everywhere, they were driven back, and a whole British army suffered destruction. Later another British invasion took place to avenge this disaster. The British occupied Kabul and blew up the great covered bazaar of the city, and the British soldiery plundered and set fire to many parts of the city. It was clear however that Afghanistan could not easily be held by the British without continuous fighting. So they retired.

Nearly forty years later, in 1878, the British in India were again unnerved by the Amir, or ruler, of Afghanistan becoming friend with Russia. To a large extent history repeated itself. There was another war, and the British invaded the country and seemed to have won, when the British envoy and party were massacred by the Afghans and a British army defeated. The British took some measures of retribution and again withdrew from the "hornet's nest". For many years afterwards the position of Afghanistan was peculiar. The British would not allow the Amir to have any direct relations with other foreign countries, and at the same time they gave him annually a large sum of money. Thirteen years ago, in 1919, there was a third Afghan War, which resulted in Afghanistan becoming fully independent. But this is outside the scope of the period we are discussing now.

There were other little wars also. One of these, a particularly shameless one was forced on Sind in 1843. The British Agent there bullied the Sindhis and goaded them to action, and then crushed them and annexed the province. And as a profitable side line, prize money was distributed to the British officers for this deed; the

Agent, Sir Charles Napier's share being about seven lakhs of rupees! It is not surprising that the India of the period attracted the unscrupulous and adventurous Britisher.

Oudh also was annexed in 1856. It was in a frightful state of mis-government at the time. The rulers for some time past had been the Nawab-Viziers, as they were called. Originally, the Nawab-Vizier had been appointed by the Mughal Emperor at Delhi as his governor of Oudh. But with the decay of the Mughal Empire Oudh became independent. But not for long. The later Nawab-Viziers were thoroughly incompetent and depraved, and even if they wanted to do any good, they were unable to do it because of the interference of the East India Company. They had no real power left, and the British were not at all interested in the internal government of Oudh. So Oudh went to pieces, and, inevitably, became part of the British dominions.

I have said enough, and perhaps more than enough, of wars and annexations. But all these were just the outward indications of a great process that was going on and that was bound to go on. In India the old economic order was already breaking up when the British came. Feudalism was cracking up. Even if no foreigners had come to India then, the feudal order could not long have survived. As in Europe, it would have given place slowly to a new order under which the new productive classes had more power. But before this change could take place; when only the break-up had occurred, the British came and, without much difficulty, stepped into the breach. The rulers they fought in India and defeated belonged already to a past and vanishing age. They had no real future before them. The British were thus, under the circumstances, bound to succeed. They hastened the end of the feudal order in India; and yet strangely, as we shall see later, they tried to prop it up outwardly and thus put obstacles in the way of India's progress to the new order.

Thus the British became the agents of a historical

process in India—the process which was to change feudal India to the modern kind of industrialised capitalist state. They did not realise this themselves; and certainly the various Indian rulers who fought them knew nothing about it. An order that is doomed seldom sees the signs of the times, seldom understands that it has fulfilled its purpose and its function and should retire gracefully before all-powerful events force it into undignified retreat, seldom understands the lesson of history, and seldom appreciates that the world is marching on leaving it behind in the “dustbin of history”, as somebody has said. Even so, the Indian feudal order did not realise all this and fought unavailingly against the British. Even so, the British in India and elsewhere in the East to-day do not realise that their day is past, the day of empire is past, and the world marches onward relentlessly pushing the British Empire into the “dustbin of history”.

(But the feudal order that prevailed in India, when the British were spreading out, made one more final effort to recover power and drive out the foreigner. This was the great revolt of 1857. All over the country there was a great deal of dissatisfaction and discontent against the British. The East India Company's policy was to make money and to do little else; and this policy, added to the ignorance and rapacity of many of its officers, had resulted in widespread misery. Even the British Indian army was affected and there were many petty mutinies. Many of the feudal chiefs and their descendants were naturally bitter against their new masters. So a great revolt was organised secretly. This organisation spread especially round about the United Provinces and in Central India, and yet, so blind are the British people in India to what Indians do or think, the government had no inkling of it. Apparently a date was fixed for the revolt to begin simultaneously in many places. But some Indian regiments at Meerut went ahead too fast and mutinied on May 10, 1857. This premature outburst upset the programme of the leaders of the revolt as it put the government on their guard.

The revolt, however, spread all over the United Provinces and Delhi and partly in Central India and Behar. It was not merely a military revolt. It was a general popular rebellion in these areas against the British. Bahadur Shah, the last of the line of the Great Mughals, a feeble old man and a poet, was proclaimed by some as Emperor. The revolt developed into a war of Indian independence against the hated foreigner, but it was an independence of the old feudal type, with autocratic emperors at the head. There was no freedom for the common people in it, but large numbers of them joined it because they connected their miserable condition and poverty with the coming of the British, and also in some places because of the hold of the big landlords. Religious animosity also urged them on. Both Hindus and Mohammedans took full part in this war.

For many months British rule in North and Central India hung almost by a thread. But the fate of the Revolt was settled by the Indians themselves. The Sikhs and the Gurkhas supported the British. The Nizam in the South, and Scindia in the North and many other Indian States also lined up with the British. Even apart from these defections the Revolt had the seeds of failure in it. It was fighting for a lost cause, the feudal order; it had no good leadership; it was badly organised and there were mutual squabbles all the time. Some of the rebels also sullied their cause by cruel massacres of the British. This barbarous behaviour naturally set up the backs of the British people in India, and they paid it back in the same coin, but a hundred and a thousand times multiplied. The English were especially incensed at a massacre of English men and women and children in Cawnpore, treacherously ordered, it is stated, after promise of safety had been given, by Nana Sahab, a descendant of the Peshwa. A memorial well in Cawnpore commemorates this horrible tragedy.

In many an outlying station the English were surrounded by crowds. Sometimes they were treated well, more often badly. They fought well and bravely against

great odds. The siege of Lucknow stands out, coupled with the names of Outram and Havelock, as an example of British courage and endurance. The siege and fall of Delhi in September 1857 marked the turning point of the Revolt. Henceforth and for many months afterwards the British crushed the Revolt. In doing so they spread terror everywhere. Vast numbers were shot down in cold blood; large numbers were shot to pieces from the mouth of cannon; thousands were hung from the wayside trees. An English general, Neill, who marched from Allahabad to Cawnpore, is said to have hung people all the way, till hardly a tree remained along the road side which had not been converted into a scaffold. Prosperous villages were rooted out and destroyed. It is all a terrible and most painful story and I hardly dare tell you all the bitter truth. If Nana Sahab had behaved barbarously and treacherously, many an English officer exceeded his barbarity a hundred fold. If mobs of mutinous Indian soldiers, without officers or leaders, had been guilty of cruel and revolting deeds, the trained British soldiers, led by their officers, exceeded them in cruelty and barbarity. I do not want to compare the two. It is a sorry business on both sides, but our perverted histories tell us a lot about the treachery and cruelty on the Indian side and hardly mention the other side. It is also well to remember that the cruelty of a mob is nothing compared to the cruelty of an organised government when it begins to behave like a mob. Even to-day, if you go to many of the villages in our province, you will find that the people have still got a vivid and ghastly memory of the horrors that befell them during the crushing of the Revolt.

In the midst of the horrors of the Revolt and its suppression, one name stands out, a bright spot in a dark back ground. This is the name of Lakshmi Bai, Rani of Jhansi, a girl-widow, twenty years of age, who donned a man's dress and came out to lead her people against the British. Many a story is told of her spirit and ability and undaunted courage. Even the English general who

opposed her has called her the "best and bravest" of the rebel leaders. She died while fighting.

The Revolt of 1857-58 was the last flicker of feudal India. It ended many things. It ended the line of the Great Mughal, for Bahadur Shah's two sons and a grandson were shot down in cold blood, without any reason or provocation by an English officer, Hudson, as he was carrying them away to Delhi. Thus, ignominiously, ended the line of Timur and Babar and Akbar.

The Revolt also put an end to the rule of the East India Company in India. The British government now took direct charge and the British Governor-General blossomed out into a "Viceroy". Nineteen years later, in 1877, the Queen of England took the title of "Kaiser-i-Hind", the old title of the Caesars and of the Byzantine Empire, adapted to India. The Mughal dynasty was no more. But the spirit and even symbols of autocracy remained, and another Great Mughal sat in England.

THE INDIAN ARTISAN GOES TO THE WALL

December 1, 1932

We have done with the nineteenth century wars in India. I am glad of it. We can now proceed to consider more important happenings of this period in India. But remember that these wars for the benefit of England were carried on at the expense of India. The British people practised with great success the method of making the people of India pay for their own conquest. The Indian people also paid with blood and treasure for the conquest of neighbouring peoples with whom they had no quarrel—the Burmese and Afghans. The wars impoverished India to some extent, for all war means destruction of wealth. War also meant prize money for the conquerors as we have seen in the case of Sind. In spite of this impoverishment, due to this and other causes, the flow of gold and silver to the East India Company continued so that fat dividends might be paid to their share-holders.

I think I have told you previously that the early days of the British power in India were the days of merchant adventurers who traded and plundered indiscriminately. The East India Company and its agents carried off in this way a vast amount of the accumulated wealth of India. This was practically without any return to India. In the case of ordinary trade there is some give and take but in the second half of the eighteenth century, after Plassey, the money all went one way—to England. India was thus deprived of a great deal of its old wealth and this went to help the industrial development of England at a vital period of transition. This first British period in India, based on

trade and naked plunder, ended roughly by the end of the eighteenth century.

The second period of British rule covered the nineteenth century when India became a great source for raw materials which were sent to the factories of England, and a market for British manufactured goods. This was done at the expense of India's progress and economic development. For the first half of the century the East India Company, a trading company, started originally to make money, governed India. The British Parliament, however, paid more and more attention to Indian affairs. Then, after the Revolt of 1857-58, as we have seen in the last letter, the British Government took direct charge of India. But this made no vital difference in the fundamental policy, for the government represented the same class which controlled the East India Company.

Between the economic interests of India and England there was an obvious conflict. This conflict was always decided in England's favour as all power lay with England. Even before the industrialisation of England a famous English writer had pointed out the harmful effects of the East India Company's rule in India. This man was Adam Smith, who is called the father of political economy. In a famous book of his called *The Wealth of Nations*, which was published as early as 1776, he said, referring to the East India Company:

"The government of an exclusive company of merchants is perhaps the worst of all governments for any country whatever. It is the interest of the East India Company considered as sovereigns that the European goods which are carried to their Indian dominions should be sold there as cheaply as possible; and that the Indian goods which are brought from there should be sold there as dear as possible. But the reverse of this is their interest as merchants. As sovereigns their interest is exactly the same with that of the country which they govern. As merchants their interest is directly opposite to that interest."

I have told you that when the British came to India the old feudal order was breaking up. The fall of the

Mughal Empire produced political chaos and disorder in many parts of India. But even so "India in the eighteenth century was a great manufacturing as well as a great agricultural country, and the Indian hand-looms supplied the markets of Asia and Europe," as an Indian economist, Romesh Chundra Dutt, has written. In the course of these letters I have told you of India's control over foreign markets in ancient days. Four thousand years old mummies in Egypt were wrapped in fine Indian muslin. The skill of the Indian artisan was famous in the east as well as the west. Even when political downfall came the artisans did not forget the cunning of their hands. The English and other foreign merchants who came to India in quest of trade came not to sell foreign goods here but to buy the fine and delicate articles made in India and to sell them at a great profit in Europe. Thus the European traders were attracted first not by raw materials but by the manufactured wares of India. The East India Company, before it gained dominion in India, carried on a very profitable business by selling Indian made linens and woollens and silks and embroidered goods. In particular a high degree of efficiency was reached in India in the textile industry, that is in the making of cotton, silk and woollen goods. "Weaving," says R. C. Dutt, "was the national industry of the people and spinning was the pursuit of millions of women." Indian Textiles went to England and other parts of Europe, to China and Japan and Burma and Arabia and Persia and parts of Africa.

Clive has described the city of Murshidabad in Bengal in 1757 as a city "as extensive, populous and rich as the city of London, with this difference that there are individuals in the first possessing infinitely greater property than in the last." This was in the very year of Plassey when the British finally established themselves in Bengal. At the very moment of political downfall, Bengal was rich and full of many industries, and sending out her fine fabrics to different parts of the world. The

city of Dacca was especially famous for its fine muslins and did a huge export trade in them.

Thus India at this period had developed far beyond the purely agricultural and village stage. Of course India was and still is and must long remain predominantly agricultural. But with village life and agriculture, a town life had also developed. In these towns the artisans and craftsmen gathered, and collective production took place, that is, there were little factories employing a hundred or more artisans. Of course these factories could not be compared to the huge factories of the Machine Age which came later. In Western Europe, and especially in the Netherlands, there were many such factories before industrialism began.

India was in a transition stage. It was a manufacturing country and a bourgeois class was being evolved in these towns. The owners of these factories were capitalists who supplied raw material to the craftsmen. In course of time this class would no doubt have grown powerful enough, as in Europe, to replace the feudal class. Just then the British intervened with fatal results to India's industries.

At first, the East India Company encouraged Indian industries as they made money out of them. The sale of Indian goods in foreign countries brought gold and silver to the country. But the manufacturers in England did not like this competition and so they induced their government, early in the eighteenth century, to tax Indian goods coming to England. Some Indian articles were entirely prohibited from entering England and, I believe, it was made a crime for any one to wear in public some Indian stuff! They could enforce their boycott with the help of the law. Here in India at present a mention of the boycott of British cloth lands one in Jail! This policy of boycott of Indian goods by England would not, by itself, have done much harm, for many other markets remained. But England happened to control a great part of India at the time, through the East India Company, and England

deliberately began a policy of pushing on British industries at the cost of Indian industries. English goods could enter India without the payment of any duty. In India the artisans and craftsmen were harassed and forced to work in the East India Company's factories. Even the internal trade of India was crippled by means of certain transit duties, that is duties which had to be paid if goods were sent from place to place.

So efficient was the textile industry of India that even the rising English machine industry could not compete with it and had to be protected by a duty of about 80 per cent. Early in the nineteenth century some Indian silks and cottons could be sold in the British market at a much lower price than those made in England. But this could not last when England, the ruling power in India, was bent on crushing Indian industries. In any event the products of the Indian cottage industries could not long compete with machine industry as this improved. For machine industry is a far more efficient way of manufacturing large quantities of goods, which are thus much cheaper than cottage made goods. But England forcibly hurried the process and prevented India from adapting herself gradually to changed conditions.

So India, which had been for hundreds of years "the Lancashire of the eastern world", and had, in the eighteenth century supplied cotton goods on a vast scale to Europe, lost her position as a manufacturing country, and became just a consumer of British goods. The machine did not come to India, as it might have done in the ordinary course; but machine made goods came from outside. The current which was flowing from India, bearing Indian goods to foreign countries, and bringing back gold and silver, was reversed. Henceforth foreign goods came to India and gold and silver went out of it.

The textile industry of India was the first to collapse before this onslaught. As machine industry developed in England, other Indian industries followed the way of the textile industry. Ordinarily it is the duty of a

country's government to protect and encourage the country's industries. But far from protecting and encouraging, the East India Company gave a good kick to every industry which came into conflict with British industry. Ship building in India collapsed, and the metal workers could not carry on, and the manufacture of glass and paper also dwindled away.

At first foreign goods reached the port towns and the interior near them. As roads and railways were built foreign goods went further and further inland and drove out the artisan even from the village. The cutting through of the Suez Canal brought England nearer to India and it was cheaper to bring British goods. So more and more foreign machine goods came and they went even to the remote villages. The process went on right through the nineteenth century, and indeed it is going on to some extent still. During the last few years, however, there have been some checks to this which we shall consider later.

This spreading, creeping movement of British goods, chiefly cloth, brought death to the hand industries of India. But there was another aspect which was more terrible still. What of the millions of artisans who were thrown out of work? What of the vast numbers of weavers and other workers who became unemployed? In England also the artisans were thrown out of work when the big factories came. They suffered greatly, but they found work in the new factories and so they adapted themselves to the new conditions. In India there was no such alternative. There were no factories to go to; the British did not want India to become a modern industrial country and did not encourage factories. So the poor, homeless, workless, starving artisans fell back on the land. But even the land did not welcome them; there were enough people already on it and there was no land to be had. Some of the ruined artisans managed to become peasants, but most of them became just landless labourers on the lookout for a job. And large numbers must have simply starved

to death. In 1834 the English Governor-General in India is said to have reported that "The misery hardly finds a parallel in the history of commerce. The bones of the cotton weavers are bleaching the plains of India."

Most of these weavers and artisans had lived in towns and cities. Now that their occupation was gone they drifted back to the land and to the villages. And so the population of the towns went down and the population of the villages went up. That is, to put it another way, India became less urban and more rural. This ruralization continued right through the nineteenth century, and even now it has not stopped. Now this is a very curious thing about India during this period. All over the world the effect of machine industry and industrialisation was to draw people from the villages to towns. In India there was the opposite tendency. The cities and towns grew smaller and languished. And more and more people hung on to agriculture to find a very difficult livelihood.

Together with the main industries, many an auxiliary or subsidiary industry also began to disappear. Carding, dying, printing became less and less; and hand spinning stopped and *charkhas* disappeared from millions of homes. This meant that the peasantry lost an additional source of income, for spinning by the members of the peasant household had helped to add to the income from land. All this had happened of course in Western Europe when machine industry had begun. But the change had been natural there, and if there was the death of one order there was at the same time the birth of a new order. In India the change was violent. The old order of manufacturing cottage industries was killed, but there was no rebirth; it was not permitted by the British authorities in the interest of British industry.

We have seen that India was a prosperous manufacturing country when the British gained power here. The next stage, in the ordinary course, should have been to make the country industrial and to introduce the big

machine. But instead of going forward India actually went back as a result of British policy. She ceased even to be a manufacturing country and became, more than ever, an agricultural country.

So poor agriculture had to support all these vast numbers of unemployed artisans and others. The pressure on land became terrible, and yet it still went on increasing. This is the foundation and the basis of the Indian problem of poverty. From this policy most of our ills have resulted. And till this basic problem is solved there can be no ending of the poverty and misery of the Indian peasant and village-dweller.

Too many people having no profession but agriculture, hanging on to the land, cut up their farms and holdings into tiny little bits. There was not more to go round. The little land each peasant household had was too small to support it decently. Poverty and semi-starvation always faced them at the best of times. And often enough the times were far from good. They were at the mercy of the seasons and the elements and the monsoons. And famines came and terrible diseases spread and carried off millions. They went to the *bania*, the village money-lender, and borrowed money, and their debts grew bigger and bigger and all hope and possibility of payment passed, and life became a burden too heavy to be borne. Such became the condition of the vast majority of the population of India under British rule in the nineteenth century.

THE VILLAGE, THE PEASANT AND THE LANDLORD IN INDIA

December 2, 1932

I have told you in my last letter of the British policy in India which resulted in the death of Indian cottage industries and the driving of the artisan to agriculture and the village. This over-pressure or burden on the land of far too many people who have no other occupation is, as I have said, the great problem in India. It is due to this, largely, that India is poor. If these people could be diverted from the land and given other wealth-producing occupations, they would not only add to the wealth of the country, but the pressure on land would be greatly relieved, and even agriculture would look up.

It is often said that this over-pressure on land is due to the growth of the population of India and not so much to British policy. This argument is not a correct one. It is true that the population of India has gone up during the last hundred years, but so have the populations of most other countries. In Europe indeed the proportionate increase, especially in England and Belgium and Holland and Germany, has been far greater. The question of the growth of population of a country, or of the world as a whole, and how to provide for it, and how to restrict it, when necessary, is a very important one. I cannot enter into it here as it might confuse the other issues. But I should like to make it clear that the real cause of the pressure on land in India is the want of occupations other than agriculture, and not the growth of population. The present population of India can probably be easily absorbed and thrive in India if

other occupations and industries are forthcoming. It may be that later we may have to deal with the question of the growth of population.

Let us now examine some other aspects of British policy in India. We shall go to the village first.

I have often written to you about the village *panchāyats* of India, and how they persisted through invasion and change. As late as 1830 a British Governor in India, Sir Charles Metcalfe, described the village communities as follows:

"The village communities are little republics having nearly everything they want within themselves; and almost independent of foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. This union of the village communities, each one forming a separate little State in itself is in a high degree conducive to their happiness, and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence."

This description is very complimentary to the old village system. We have a picture of an almost idyllic state of affairs. Undoubtedly the great deal of local freedom and independence that the villages had was a good thing, and there were other good features also. But we must not lose sight of the defects of the system. To live a self-sufficient village life cut off from the rest of the world was not conducive to progress in anything. Growth and progress consist in co-operation between larger and larger units. The more a person or a group keeps to himself or itself, the more danger there is of him or it becoming self-centred and selfish and narrow-minded. Village folk when compared to town people are often narrow minded and superstitious. So the village communities, with all their good points, could not be centres of progress. They were rather primitive and backward. Handicrafts and industry flourished mainly in the towns. Of course there were large numbers of weavers spread out in the villages.

The real reason why the village communities lived their separate lives, without much contact with each other, was the lack of means of communication. There

were few good roads connecting villages. It was indeed this lack of good roads that made it rather difficult for the central government of the country to intervene too much in village affairs. Towns and villages on the banks of, or near, good sized rivers could communicate by boats, but there were not many rivers that could be used in this way. This want of easy communications came in the way of internal trade also.

The East India Company, for a great many years, was only interested in making money and paying dividends to their share-holders. They spent very little on roads, and nothing at all on education and sanitation and hospitals and the like. But later, when the British began to concentrate on buying raw material and selling British machine goods, a different policy regarding communications was adopted. On the sea-coast of India new cities sprang up to serve the growing foreign trade. These cities—like Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and later Karachi—collected raw material, like cotton, etc., for despatch to foreign countries, and received foreign machine goods, especially from England, for distribution and sale in India. These new cities were very different from the great industrial cities that were growing in the west, like Liverpool and Manchester and Birmingham and Sheffield. The European cities were manufacturing centres with big factories making goods, and ports for the despatch of these goods. The new Indian cities produced nothing. They were just depots for foreign trade, and symbols of foreign rule.

Now I have told you that owing to British policy India was becoming more and more rural and people were leaving the towns and going to the village and the land. In spite of this, and without affecting this process, these new cities grew up on the sea-board. They grew at the expense of smaller cities and towns and not at the expense of the villages. The general process of ruralization continued.

These new cities on the sea-board had to be connected with the interior to be able to help in the

collection of raw material and the distribution of foreign goods. Some other cities also grew up as capitals or administrative centres of provinces. The need for good communications thus became urgent. Roads were made and later railways. The first railway was built in Bombay in 1853.

The old village communities were hard put to it to adapt themselves to the changing conditions produced by the destruction of Indian industries. But when more good roads and railways came and spread all over the country the old village system, which had survived for so long, broke up at last and ended. The little village republic could not keep cut off from the world when the world came knocking at its gate. The price of articles in one village immediately affected the price in another, for articles could be sent easily from one village to another. Indeed, as world communications developed, the price of wheat in Canada or the United States of America would affect the price of Indian wheat. Thus the Indian village system was dragged, by the force of events, into the circle of world prices. The old economic order in the village went to pieces and, much to the astonishment of the peasant, a new order was forced on him. Instead of growing food and other stuffs for his village market he began to grow for the world market. He was caught in the whirlpool of world production and prices and he sunk lower and lower. Previously there had been famines in India when a harvest failed, and there was nothing to fall back upon, and no suitable means to get food from other parts of the country. There were famines of food. But now a strange thing happened. People would starve in the midst of plenty, or when food was available. Even if food was not locally available, it could be brought from elsewhere by train and other swift means. The food was there, but there was no money to buy it. Thus there were famines of money and not food. And, stranger still, sometimes the very abundance of a harvest brought misery in its train for the peasantry, as we have

seen during the last three years!

So the old village system ended, and the *panchāyat* ceased to exist. We need not express any great regret for this as the system had outlived its day and did not fit in with modern conditions. But here again it broke up without any rebirth of a new village system in accord with these conditions. This work of rebuilding and rebirth still remains to be done by us. There is so much to be done when once we get out of the shackles of foreign rule that bind us!

We have so far considered the indirect results of British policy on the land and the peasant. These indirect results have been terrible enough! Let us now consider what the actual land policy of the East India Company was, that is, the policy which directly affected the peasant and all connected with the land. This is a complicated affair, and rather dull, I am afraid. But our country is full of these poor cultivators and we should make some effort to understand what ails them, and how we can serve them and better their lot.

We hear of zamindars and taluqadars and their tenants; and there are many kinds of tenants; and there are sub-tenants, that is, tenants of tenants. I shall not take you into the intricacies of all this. Broadly speaking, the zamindars to-day are middlemen, that is, they stand between the cultivator and the State. The cultivator is their tenant and he pays them rent, or a kind of tax, for the use of the land, which is supposed to belong to the zamindar. Out of this rent, the zamindar pays a portion as land revenue to the State, as a tax on his land. Thus the produce of the land is divided up into three parts; one part goes to the zamindar, another to the State, and the third remains with the tenant-cultivator. Do not imagine that these parts are equal. The cultivator works on the land, and it is due to his labour, ploughing and sowing and dozens of other activities, that the land produces anything. He is obviously entitled to the fruits of his toil. The State, as representing society as a whole, has important

functions to perform in the interest of everybody. Thus it ought to educate all the children, and build good roads and other means of communication, and have hospitals and sanitary services, and parks and museums, and a vast number of other things. For this it requires money, and it is right that it should take a share out of the produce of the land. What that share should be is another question. What the cultivator gives to the State really comes back to him, or ought to come back to him, in the shape of services—roads, education, sanitation, etc. At the present moment the State in India is represented by a foreign government and so we are apt to dislike the State. But in a properly organised and free country the State is the people.

So we have disposed of two parts of the produce of the land—one going to the cultivator and the other to the State. A third part, as we have seen, goes to the zamindar or middleman. What does he do to get it or deserve it? Nothing at all, or practically nothing. He just takes a big share in the produce—his rent—without helping in any way in the work of production. He thus becomes a fifth wheel in the coach—not only unnecessary, but an actual encumbrance, and a burden on the land. And naturally the person who suffers most from this unnecessary burden is the cultivator who has to give part of his earnings to him. It is for this reason that many people think that the zamindar or taluqadar is a wholly unnecessary middleman, and the *zamīndārī* system is bad and ought to be changed so that the middleman disappears. (At present we have this zamindari system chiefly in three provinces in India—~~Bengal, Behar and the United Provinces.~~

In the other provinces the peasant cultivators usually pay their land revenue direct to the State and there are no middlemen. These people are sometimes called peasant proprietors; sometimes, as in the Punjab, they are called zamindars, but they are different from the big zamindars of the United Provinces and Bengal and Behar.

After this long explanation I want to tell you that this zamindari system which flourishes in Bengal, Behar and the United Provinces, and about which we hear so much nowadays, is quite a new thing in India. It is a creation of the British. It did not exist before them.

In the old times there were no such zamindars or land-holders or middlemen. The cultivators gave a part of their produce direct to the State. Sometimes the village *panchāyat* acted on behalf of all the cultivators of the village. In Akbar's time, his famous finance minister, Raja Todar Mal, had a very careful survey of the land made. The government or State took one-third of the produce from the cultivator, who could, if he so chose, pay in cash. Taxes were on the whole not heavy and they increased very gradually. Then came the collapse of the Mughal Empire. The central government weakened and could not collect their taxes properly. A new way of collection then arose. Tax collectors were appointed, not on salary, but as agents who could keep one-tenth of the collections for themselves. They were called revenue farmers, or sometimes zamindars or taluqadars, but remember that these words did not mean what they mean to-day.

As the central government decayed the system became worse and worse. It even came to this that auctions were held for the revenue farming of an area and the highest bidder got it. This meant that the man who got the job had a free hand to extort as much as he could from the unhappy cultivator, and he used this freedom to the full. Gradually these revenue farmers tended to become hereditary as the government was too weak to remove them.

As a matter of fact the first so-called legal title of the East India Company in Bengal was that of revenue farmer on behalf of the Mughal Emperor. This was the grant of the "Diwani" to the Company in 1765. The Company thus became a kind of Diwan of the Mughal Emperor at Delhi. But all this was fiction. After Plassey, in 1757, the British were predominant in Bengal

and the poor Mughal Emperor had little or no power anywhere.

The East India Company and its officers were terribly greedy. As I have told you, they emptied the treasury of Bengal and laid violent hands on money wherever they could find it. They tried to squeeze Bengal and Behar and extract the maximum of land revenue. They created smaller revenue farmers and they increased the revenue demand on them most exorbitantly. The land revenue was doubled in a short space and collected pitilessly, any one not paying up punctually being turned out. The revenue farmers, on their part, exercised this cruelty and rapacity on the cultivators, who were rack-rented and ejected from their holdings. Within twelve years of Plassey, within four years of the grant of the Diwani, the policy of the East India Company, added to want of rain, brought about a terrible famine in Bengal and Behar, when one-third of the whole population perished. I have referred to this famine of 1769-70 in a previous letter to you and told you that, in spite of it, the East India Company collected the full amount of revenue. The officers of the Company deserve special mention for their remarkable efficiency. Men and women and children might die by tens of millions, but they could extort money even out of the corpses, so that big dividends might be paid to wealthy men in England.

So matters went on for another twenty years or more, and, despite the famine, the East India Company continued to extort money, and the fair province of Bengal was brought to ruin. Even the big revenue farmers were reduced to beggary, and from this one can imagine what the state of the miserable cultivator was. Things were so bad that the East India Company woke up and made an attempt to remedy them. The Governor-General of the day, Lord Cornwallis, himself a big landlord in England, wanted to create landlords after the British fashion in India. The revenue farmers for some time past had been behaving like landlords.

Cornwallis came to a settlement with them and treated them as such. The result was that for the first time India got this new type of middleman, and the cultivators were reduced to the position of mere tenants. The British dealt with these land-holders or zamindars directly and left them to do what they liked with their tenantry. There was no protection of any kind for the poor tenant from the rapacity of the landlord.

This settlement that Cornwallis made with the zamindars of Bengal and Behar in 1793 is called the "Permanent Settlement." The word "settlement" means the fixing of the amount of land revenue to be paid by each zamindar to government. For Bengal and Behar this was fixed permanently. There was to be no change. Later on, as British rule spread in the north-west to Oudh and Agra, the British policy was changed. They had temporary settlements with zamindars, not permanent as in Bengal. Each temporary settlement was revised periodically, usually every thirty years, and the sum to be paid as land revenue was fixed afresh. Usually it was enhanced at every settlement.

In the south, in Madras and round about, the zamindari system did not prevail. There was peasant proprietorship there and so the East India Company settled directly with the peasants. But there, and everywhere, an insatiable greed made the Company's officers fix the land revenue at a very high figure and this was cruelly extorted. For non-payment there was immediate ejection, but where was the poor man to go to? Owing to the over-pressure on land there was always a demand for it; there were always starving people who were willing to accept it on any conditions. Frequently there were troubles and agrarian riots when even the long suffering peasant could bear no more.

About the middle of the nineteenth century another tyranny arose in Bengal. Certain English people established themselves as landlords in order to carry on trade in indigo. They made very hard terms with their tenants about the cultivation of the indigo plant. The

tenants were compelled to grow the indigo plant in a certain part of their holdings and then had to sell this at a fixed rate to the English landlords or planters as they were called. This system is called the plantation system. The conditions forced on the tenants were so difficult that it was very difficult for them to fulfil them. The British government then came to the help of the planters, and passed special laws to force the poor tenants to cultivate indigo according to the conditions. By these laws, with their punishments, the tenants of these plantations became serfs and slaves of the planters in some respects. They were terrorised over by the agents of the indigo factories, for these English or Indian agents felt quite secure with the protection of the government. Often, when the price of indigo fell, it was far more profitable for the cultivator to grow something else, like rice, but he was not permitted to do so. There was a great deal of trouble and misery for the cultivator, and at last, exasperated beyond measure, the worm turned. The peasantry rose against the planters and sacked a factory. They were crushed back into submission.

I have tried in this letter to give you, at some length I am afraid, a picture of agrarian conditions in the nineteenth century. I have tried to explain how the lot of the Indian peasant grew steadily worse; how he was exploited by everyone who came in contact with him, by tax gatherer, and landlord, and *bania*, and planter and his agent, and by the biggest *bania* of all, the British Government, acting either through the East India Company or directly. For, at the basis of all this exploitation lay the policy deliberately pursued by the British in India. The destruction of cottage industries with no effort to replace them by other kinds of industry; the driving of the unemployed artisan to the village and the consequent over-pressure on land; landlordism; the plantation system; heavy taxation on land resulting in exorbitant rent, cruelly collected; the forcing of the peasant to the *bania* money-lender from whose iron grip he never escaped; innumerable ejections from the

land for inability to pay rent or revenue in time; and, above all, the perpetual terrorism of policeman and tax-gatherer and landlord's agent and factory agent, which almost destroyed all spirit and soul that he possessed. What could be the result of all this but inevitable tragedy and frightful catastrophe?

Terrible famines occurred which wiped off millions of the population. And strange to say even when food was lacking and people were starving for the want of it, wheat and other food grains were exported to other countries for the profit of the rich traders. But the real tragedy was not the lack of food, for food could be brought by railway train from other parts of the country, but lack of means to buy it. In 1861 there was a great famine in North India, especially in our province, and it is stated that over $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the population of the affected area died. Fifteen years later, in 1876 and for two years, there was another terrible famine in North and Central India as well as in South India. The United Provinces were again the worst sufferers, and also the Central Provinces and part of the Punjab. About ten million persons died! Again, twenty years later, in 1896, more or less in this same unhappy area, there was another famine, more terrible than any other known in Indian history. This frightful visitation laid North and Central India low and crushed it utterly. In 1900 there was still another famine.

In a brief paragraph I have told you of four mighty famines in the course of forty years. I cannot tell you and you cannot realise the terrible suffering and horror that is contained in this grim story. Indeed I am not sure that I want you to realise it, for with this realisation would come anger and great bitterness, and I do not want you to be bitter at your age.

You have heard of Florence Nightingale, the brave Englishwoman who first organised efficient nursing of those wounded in war. As long ago as 1878, she wrote: "The saddest sight to be seen in the East—nay probably in the world—is the peasant of our Eastern Empire."

She referred to the "consequences of our laws" producing in "the most fertile country in the world, a grinding, chronic semi-starvation in many places where what is called famine does not exist."

Yes, there can be few sights that are sadder than the sunken eyes of our *kisāns* with the hunted, hopeless look in them. What a burden our peasantry have carried these many years! And let us not forget that we, who have prospered a little, have been part of that burden. All of us, foreigner and Indian, have sought to exploit that long suffering *kisān* and have mounted on his back. Is it surprising that his back breaks?

But, at long last, there came a glimmering of hope for him, a whisper of better times and lighter burdens. A little man came who looked straight into his eyes, and deep down into his shrunken heart, and sensed his long agony. And there was magic in that look, and a fire in his touch, and in his voice there was understanding and a yearning and abounding love and faithfulness unto death. And when the peasant and the worker and all who were down-trodden saw him and heard him, their dead hearts woke to life and thrilled, and a strange hope rose in them, and they shouted with joy: "*Mahātmā Gāndhī kī jai*," and they prepared to march out of their valley of suffering. But the old machine that had crushed them for so long would not let them go easily. It moved again and produced new weapons, new laws and ordinances, to crush them, new chains to bind them. And then?—that is no part of my tale or history. That is still part of tomorrow, and when tomorrow becomes to-day, we shall know. But who doubts?

HOW BRITAIN RULED INDIA

December 5, 1932

I have already written you three long letters on India in the nineteenth century; the last one, indeed, was probably the longest of all the letters that I have so far written. It is a long story and a long agony, and if I compress it too much, I fear that I shall make it still more difficult to understand. I am perhaps paying more attention to this period of India's story than I have paid to other countries or other periods. That is not unnatural. Being an Indian I am more interested in it, and knowing more about it, I can write more fully. Besides, this period has something much more than a historical interest for us. Modern India, such as we find her to-day, was formed and took shape in this travail of the nineteenth century. If we are to understand India as she is, we must know something of the forces that went to make her or mar her. Only then can we serve her intelligently, and know what we should do and what path we should take.

I have not done with this period of India's history. I have still much to tell you. In these letters I take one or more aspect and tell you something about it. I deal with each aspect separately so that it may be easier to understand. But you will know of course that all these activities and changes that I have told you about, and all those that I shall describe in this letter and afterwards, took place more or less simultaneously, one influencing the other, and between them they produced the India of the nineteenth century.

Reading of these deeds and misdeeds of the British in India you will sometimes feel angry at the tyranny

they have exercised and the widespread misery that has resulted from it. But whose fault was it that this happened? Was it not due to our weakness and ignorance? Weakness and folly are always invitations to despotism. If the British can profit by our mutual dissensions, the fault is ours that we quarrel amongst ourselves. If they can divide us and so weaken us, playing on the selfishness of separate groups, our permitting this is itself a sign of the superiority of the British. Therefore if you would be angry, be angry with weakness and ignorance and mutual strife, for they are responsible for our troubles.

The tyranny of the British, we say. Whose tyranny is it after all? Who profits by it? Not the whole British race, for millions of them are themselves unhappy and tyrannised over. And undoubtedly there are small groups and classes of Indians who have profited a little by the British exploitation of India. Where are we to draw the line then? It is not a question of individuals but that of a system. We have been living under a huge machine that has exploited and crushed India's millions. This machine is the machine of the new Imperialism, the outcome of industrial capitalism. The profits of this exploitation go largely to England, but in England they go almost entirely to certain classes. Some part of the profits of exploitation remain in India also, and some classes benefit by them. It is therefore foolish for us to get angry with individuals or even with the British as a whole. If a system is wrong and injures us, it has to be changed. It makes little difference who runs it, and even good people are helpless in a bad system. With the best will in the world, you cannot convert stones and earth into good food, however much you may cook them. So it is, I think, with imperialism and capitalism. They cannot be improved; the only real improvement is to do away with them altogether. But that is my opinion. Some people differ from this. You need not take anything for granted and, when the time comes, you can come to your own conclusions. But

about one thing most people do agree, that what is wrong is the system, and it is useless getting annoyed with individuals. If we want a change let us attack and change the system. We have seen some of the evil effects of the system in India. When we consider China and Egypt and many other countries we shall see the same system, the same machine of capitalist-imperialism, at work exploiting other peoples.

We shall go back to our story. I have told you of the advanced stage of Indian cottage industries when the British came. With natural progress in the methods of production, and without any intervention from outside, it is probable that some time or other machine industry would have come to India. There was iron and coal in the country and, as we saw in England, these helped the new industrialism greatly, and indeed partly brought it about. Ultimately this would have happened in India also. There might have been some delay in this owing to the chaotic political conditions. The British, however, intervened. They represented a country and a community which had already changed over to the new big machine production. One might think, therefore, that they would favour such a change in India also, and encourage that class in India which was most likely to bring it about. They did no such thing. Indeed they did the very opposite of this. Treating India as a possible rival they broke up her industries and actually discouraged the growth of machine industry.

Thus we find a somewhat remarkable state of affairs in India. We find that the British, the most advanced people in Europe at the time, ally themselves in India with the most backward and conservative classes. They bolster up a dying feudal class; they create landlords; they support the hundreds of dependent Indian rulers in their semi-feudal states. They actually strengthen feudalism in India. Yet these British had been the pioneers in Europe of the middle class or bourgeois revolution which had given their parliament power;

they had also been the pioneers in the Industrial Revolution which had resulted in introducing industrial capitalism to the world. It was because of their lead in these matters that they went far ahead of their rivals and established a vast empire.

It is not difficult to understand why the British acted in this way in India. The whole basis of capitalism is cut-throat competition and exploitation, and imperialism is an advanced stage of this. So the British, having the power, killed their actual rivals and deliberately prevented the growth of other rivals. They could not possibly make friends with the masses, for the whole object of their presence in India was to exploit them. The interests of the exploiters and the exploited could never be the same. So they, the British, fell back on the relics of feudalism which India still possessed. These had little real strength left even when the British came; but they were propped up and given a small share in the exploitation of the country. This propping up could only give temporary relief to a class which had outlived its utility; when the props were removed they were sure to fall or adapt themselves to the new conditions. There were as many as seven hundred Indian States, big and small, depending on the good-will of the British. You know some of these big states: Hyderabad, Kashmir, Mysore, Baroda, Gwalior, etc. But, curiously, most of the Indian rulers of these states are not descended from the old feudal nobility, just as most of the big zamindars have no very ancient traditions. There is one chief however, the Maharana of Udaipur, the head of the Surya Vanshi, Rajputs of the race of the Sun, who can trace his lineage back to dim pre-historic days. Probably the only living person who can compete with him in this respect is the Mikado of Japan.

British rule also helped religious conservatism. This sounds strange, for the British claimed to progress Christianity and yet their coming made Hinduism and Islam in India more rigid. To some extent this reaction was natural as foreign invasion tends to make the religions

and culture of the country protect themselves by rigidity. It was in this way that Hinduism had become rigid and caste had developed after the Muslim invasions. Now both Hinduism and Islam reacted after this fashion. But, apart from this, the British government in India actually—both deliberately and unconsciously—helped the conservative elements in the two religions. The British were not interested in religion or in conversions; they were out to make money. They were afraid of interfering in any way in religious matters lest the people, in their anger, rise against them. So to avoid even the suspicion of interference they went so far as actually to protect and help the country's religions, or rather the external forms of religion. The result often was that the outer form remained but there was little inside it.

This fear of irritating the orthodox people made Government side with them in matters of reform. Thus the cause of reform was held up. An alien government can seldom introduce social reform because every change it seeks to introduce is resented by the people. Hinduism and Hindu Law were in many respects changing and progressive, though the progress had been remarkably slow in recent centuries. Hindu Law itself is largely custom, and customs change and grow. This elasticity of the Hindu Law disappeared under the British and gave place to rigid legal codes drawn up after consultation with the most orthodox people. Thus the growth of Hindu Society, slow as it was, was stopped. The Muslims resented the new conditions even more and retired into their shells.

A great deal of credit is taken by the British for the abolition of (what is rather incorrectly called) *satī*, the practice of a Hindu widow burning herself on the funeral pyre of her husband. They deserve some credit for this, but as a matter of fact the government only took action after many years of agitation by Indian reformers headed by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Previous to them other rulers, and especially the Marathas, had

forbidden it; the Portuguese Albuquerque had abolished the practice in Goa. It was put down by the British as a result of Indian agitation and Christian missionary endeavours. So far as I can remember this was the only reform of religious significance which was brought about by the British Government.

~~So the British allied themselves with all the backward and conservative elements in the country.~~ And they tried to make India a purely agricultural country producing raw materials for their industries. To prevent factories growing up in India they actually put a duty on machinery entering India! Other countries encouraged their own industries. Japan, as we shall see, simply galloped ahead with industrialisation. But in India the British Government put its foot down. Owing to the duty on machinery, which was not taken off till 1860, the cost of building a factory in India was four times that of building it in England, although labour was far cheaper in India. This policy of obstruction could only delay matters; it could not stop the inevitable march of events. About the middle of the century machine industry began to grow in India. The jute industry began in Bengal with British capital. The coming of the railways helped the growth of industry, and after 1880 cotton mills, largely with Indian capital, grew up in Bombay and Ahmedabad. Then came mining. Except for the cotton mills, this slow industrialisation was very largely with British capital. And all this was almost in spite of the government. Government talked of the *laissez faire* policy, of allowing matters to take their own course, of not interfering with private initiative. The British Government had interfered with Indian trade in England and crushed it with duties and prohibitions when this was a rival in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Having got on top they could afford to talk of *laissez faire*. As a matter of fact, however, they were not merely indifferent. They actually discouraged some Indian industry, especially the growing cotton industry of Bombay and

Ahmedabad. A tax or duty was put on the products of these Indian mills; it was called the excise duty on cotton. The object of this was to help British cotton goods from Lancashire to compete with Indian textiles. Almost every country puts duties on some foreign goods either to protect its own industries, or to raise money. But the British in India did a very unusual and remarkable thing. They put the duty on Indian goods themselves! This cotton excise duty was continued, in spite of a great deal of agitation, till recent years.

In this way modern industry grew slowly in India despite the Government. The richer classes in India cried out more and more for industrial development. It was only as late, I think, as 1905 that the Government created a department of Commerce and Industry, but even so, little was done by it, till the World War came. This growth of industrial conditions created a class of industrial workers who worked in the city factories. The pressure on land, of which I have told you, and the semi-famine conditions of the rural areas, drove many villagers to these factories as well as to the great plantations that were rising in Bengal and Assam. This pressure also led many to emigrate to other countries where they were told they would get high wages. Emigration took place especially to South Africa, Fiji, Mauritius, and Ceylon. But the change did little good to the workers. The emigrants in some of the countries were treated almost like slaves. In the tea plantations of Assam they were in no better condition. Fed up with these conditions they sought, later on, to return to their villages from the plantations. But they were not welcome in their own villages as there was no land to be had.

The workers in the factories soon found that the slightly higher wage did not go very far. Everything cost more in the cities; altogether the cost of living was much higher. The places where they had to live were wretched hovels, filthy, damp and dark and insanitary. Their working conditions were also bad. In the village

they had often starved, but they had had their fill of the sun and of fresh air. But there was no fresh air and little sun for the factory worker. His wages were not enough to meet the higher cost of living. Even women and children had to work long hours. Mothers with babes in their arms took to drugging their babies so that they might not interfere with work. Such were the miserable conditions under which these industrial workers worked in the factories. They were unhappy of course, and discontent grew. Sometimes, in very despair, they had a strike, that is they stopped work. But they were weak and feeble and could easily be crushed by their wealthy employers, backed often by the government. Very slowly and after bitter experience they learnt the value of joint action. They formed trade unions.

Do not think that this is a description of past conditions. There has been some improvement in labour conditions in India. Some laws have been passed giving just a little protection to the poor worker. But even now you have but to go to Cawnpore or Bombay or a number of other places where factories exist, and you will be horrified to see the houses of the workers.

I have written to you in this and other letters of the British in India and of the British Government in India. What was this like and how did it function? There was the East India Company at first but behind it was the British Parliament. In 1858, after the great Revolt, the British Parliament took direct charge and later the English king, or rather queen, for there was a queen then, blossomed out as Kaiser-i-Hind. In India there was the Governor-General, who became a Viceroy also, at the top, and under him were crowds of officials. India was divided up, more or less as it is now, into large provinces and States. The States under Indian rulers were supposed to be half-independent, but as a matter of fact they were wholly dependent on the British. An English official, called the resident, lived in each of the larger States and he exercised general control over the

administration. He was not interested in internal reform and it mattered little to him how bad or old fashioned the government of the State was. What he was interested in was in strengthening British authority in the State.

About a third of India was divided up into these States. The remaining two-thirds were under the direct government of the British. These two-thirds were therefore called British India. All the high officials in British India were British, except towards the end of the century, when a few Indians crept in. Even so all power and authority of course remained, and still remains, with the British. These high officials, apart from the military, were members of what is called the Indian Civil Service. The whole government of India was thus controlled by this service, the I.C.S. Such a government by officials, who appoint each other and are not responsible for what they do to the people, is called a bureaucracy, from the word bureau, an office.

We hear a great deal about this I.C.S. They have been a curious set of persons. They were efficient in some ways. They organised the government, strengthened British rule and incidentally, profited greatly by it themselves. All the departments of government which helped in consolidating British rule and in collecting taxes were efficiently organised. Other departments were neglected. Not being appointed by, or responsible to, the people, the I.C.S. paid little attention to these other departments which concerned the people most. As was natural under the circumstances, they became arrogant and overbearing and contemptuous of public opinion. Narrow and limited in outlook, they began to look upon themselves as the wisest people on earth. The good of India meant to them primarily the good of their own service. They formed a kind of mutual admiration society and were continually praising each other. Unchecked power and authority inevitably leads to this, and the Indian Civil Service were practically masters of India. The British Parliament was too far

away to interfere and, in any event, it had no occasion to interfere as they served its interests and the interests of British industry. As for the interests of the people of India, there was no way of influencing them to any marked extent. Even feeble criticism of their actions was resented by them, so intolerant were they.

Much has happened in India in recent years but the I.C.S. still remains fundamentally what it was. A great Indian, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, described the qualities of this I.C.S. bureaucracy in this way:

Its utter contempt of public opinion, its arrogance, pretensions to superior wisdom, its reckless disregard of the most cherished feelings of the people, mocking appeal to its sense of justice, its cool preference of service interests to those of the government.

These qualities of theirs and their self-righteous poses are amusing enough at times. Their pompous superiority and all-knowing air reminds one of some of Gilbert and Sullivan's characters. Pooh Bah of the *Mikado* is very amusing on the stage. But in actual life and at close quarters he may not be so delightful to contemplate! The habit of admiring oneself and a smug satisfaction at one's own work is not very pleasant for others, but it may be allowed to pass. We may also put up with another common habit of high officials in India—the attempt to perpetuate their memory by having statues and other monuments erected to one another, or by the naming of buildings and parks and roads after themselves. One may pass this even, only the statues are usually very ugly! But one cannot excuse the unhappy results of their selfish policy, for this means misery for our people.

And yet the Indian Civil Service has had some good and honest and capable people in it. But they could not change the drift of policy or divert the current which was dragging India along. The I.C.S. were after all the agents of the industrial and financial interests in England, who were chiefly interested in exploiting India.

This bureaucratic government of India grew efficient wherever its own interests and the interests of British industry were concerned. But education and sanitation and hospitals and the many other activities which go to make a healthy and progressive nation were neglected. For many years there was no thought of these. The old village schools died away. Then slowly and grudgingly a little start was made. This start in education was also brought about by their own needs. The British people filled all the high offices but obviously they could not fill the smaller offices and the clerkships. Clerks were wanted, and it was to produce clerks that schools and colleges were first started by the British. Ever since then, this has been the main purpose of education in India; and most of its products are only capable of being clerks. But soon the supply of clerks was greater than the demand in government and other offices. Many were left over, and these formed a new class of educated unemployed. To-day there are large numbers of these graduates and others, who have gone through the universities but learnt no trade. Most of them can make nothing or produce nothing. They can only become clerks or petty officials in government offices, or lawyers.

Bengal took the lead in this new English education and, therefore, the early supply of clerks was very largely Bengali. In 1857 three universities were started—in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. A fact worth noticing is that the Muslims did not take kindly to the new education. They were thus left behind in the race for clerkships and government service. Later this became one of their grievances.

Another fact worth noticing is that even when the government made a start with education, girls were completely ignored. This is not surprising. The education given was meant to produce clerks and men clerks were wanted, and only they were available then owing to backward social customs. So girls were wholly neglected, and it was long afterwards when some little

beginning was made for them.

Writing about India, my pen seems to go on an on. But I must write one more letter about this period and tell you of the growth of nationalism in India.

THE RE-AWAKENING OF INDIA

December 7, 1932

I have told you of the consolidation of British rule in India and of the policy which brought poverty and misery to our people. Peace certainly came and orderly government also, and both were welcome after the disorders which followed the break-up of the Mughal empire. Organised gangs of thieves and dacoits had been put down. But peace and order were worth little to the man in the field and the factory, who was crushed under the grinding weight of the new domination. But again, I would remind you, it is foolish to get angry with a country or with a people, with Britain or the British. They were as much the victims of circumstances as we were. Our study of history has shown us that life is often very cruel and callous. To get excited over it or merely to blame people, is foolish and does not help. It is much more sensible to try to understand the causes of poverty and misery and exploitation and then try to remove them. If we fail to do so and fall back in the march of events, we are bound to suffer. India fell back in this way. She became a bit of a fossil; her society was crystallized in old tradition; her social system lost its energy and life and began to stagnate. It is not surprising that India suffered. The British happened to be the agents to make her suffer. If they had not been there, perhaps some other people might have acted in the same way. So we need not blame the British. But at the same time it is the height of absurdity for Englishmen to talk solemnly and pompously of being the trustees for India and of having conferred innumerable benefits on her. One cannot argue with a blind

complacency. One can only say bunkum to it!

But one great benefit the English did confer on India. The very impact of their new and vigorous life shook up India and brought about a feeling of political unity and nationality. Perhaps such a kick, painful as it was, was needed to rejuvenate, or make young again, our ancient country and people. English education intended to produce clerks, also put Indians in touch with the current western thought. A new class began to arise, the English educated class, small in numbers and cut off from the masses, but still destined to take the lead in the new nationalist movements. This class, at first, was full of admiration for England and the English ideas of liberty. Just then some people in England talked a lot about liberty and democracy. All this was rather vague, and in India England was ruling despotically for her own benefit. But it was hoped, rather optimistically, that England would confer freedom on India at the right time.

The impact of western ideas on India had its effect on Hindu religion also to some extent. The masses were not affected and, as I have told you, the British Government's policy actually helped the orthodox people. But the new middle class that was arising, consisting of government servants and professional people, were affected. Early in the nineteenth century an attempt to reform Hinduism on western lines took place in Bengal. Of course Hinduism had had innumerable reformers in the past, and some of these I have mentioned to you in the course of these letters. But the new attempt was definitely influenced by Christianity and western thought. The maker of this attempt was Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a great man and a great scholar, whose name we have come across already in connection with the abolition of *Satī*. He knew Sanskrit and Arabic and many other languages well, and he carefully studied various religions. He was opposed to religious ceremonies and *pūjās* and the like and he pleaded for social reform and women's education. The society he founded

was called the *Brahmo Samāj*. It was, and has remained, a small organisation, so far as numbers go, and it has been confined to the English knowing people of Bengal. But it has had a considerable influence on the life of Bengal. The Tagore family took to it, and for long the poet Rabindranath's father (I think), known as Maharshi Debendra Nath Tagore, was the prop and pillar of the Samāj. Another leading member was Keshab Chander Sen.

Later in the century another religious reform movement took place. This was in the Punjab and the founder was Swami Dayananda Saraswati. Another society was started called the *Āryā Samāj*. This also rejected many of the later growths of Hinduism and combated caste. Its cry was "back to the Vedas". Although it was a reforming movement, influenced no doubt by Muslim and Christian thought, it was in essence an aggressive militant movement. And so it happened, curiously, that the *Āryā Samāj* which, of many Hindu sects, probably came nearest to Islam, became a rival and opponent of Islam. It was an attempt to convert the defensive and static Hinduism into an aggressive missionary religion. It was meant to revive Hinduism. What gave the movement some strength was a colouring of nationalism. It was indeed Hindu nationalism raising its head. And the very fact that it was Hindu nationalism made it difficult for it to become Indian nationalism.

The *Āryā Samāj* was far more widespread than the Brahmo Samāj, especially in the Punjab. But it was largely confined to the middle classes. The *Samāj* had done a great deal of educational work, and has started many schools and colleges, both for boys and girls.

Another remarkable religious man of the century, but very different from the others I have mentioned in this letter, was Ramakrishna Paramhansa. He did not start any aggressive society for reform. He laid stress on service and the Ramakrishna Sevashrams in many parts of the country are carrying on this tradition of

service of the weak and poor. A famous disciple of Ramakrishna's was Swami Vivekananda. Very eloquently and forcibly he preached the gospel of nationalism. This was not in any way anti-Muslim or anti anyone else, nor was it the somewhat narrow nationalism of the Āryā Samāj. None the less Vivekananda's nationalism was Hindu nationalism, and it had its roots in Hindu religion and culture.

Thus it is interesting to note that the early waves of nationalism in India in the nineteenth century were religious and Hindu. The Moslems naturally could take no part in this Hindu nationalism. They kept apart. Having kept away from English education, the new ideas affected them less, and there was far less intellectual ferment amongst them. Many decades later, they began to come out of their shell and then, as with the Hindus, their nationalism took the shape of a Muslim nationalism, looking back to Islamic traditions and culture, and fearful of losing these because of the Hindu majority. But this Muslim movement became evident much later, towards the end of the century.

Another interesting thing to note is that these reform and forward movements in Hinduism and Islam tried to fit in, as far as possible, the new scientific and political ideas derived from the west with their old religious notions and habits. They were not prepared to challenge and examine fearlessly these old notions and habits; nor could they ignore the new world of science and political and social ideas which lay around them. So they tried to harmonise the two trying to show that all modern ideas and progress could be traced back to the old sacred books of their religions. This attempt was bound to end in failure. It merely prevented people from thinking straight. Instead of thinking boldly and trying to understand the new forces and ideas which were changing the world, they were oppressed by the weight of ancient habit and tradition. Instead of looking ahead and marching ahead, they were all the time furtively looking back. It is not easy to go ahead, if the

head is always turned and looks back. One is apt to stumble and to develop a pain in the neck!

The English educated class grew slowly in the cities, and at the same time a new middle class arose consisting of professional people, that is lawyers and doctors and the like, and merchants and traders. There had been of course a middle class in the past but this was largely crushed by the early British policy. The new bourgeoisie, or middle class, was a direct outcome of British rule, in a sense they were the hangers-on of this rule. They shared to a small extent in the exploitation of the masses; they took the crumbs that fell from the richly laden table of the British ruling classes. They were petty officials helping in the British administration of the country; many were lawyers assisting in the working of the law courts and growing rich by litigation; and there were merchants, the go-betweens of British trade and industry, who sold British goods for a profit or commission.

The great majority of these people of the new bourgeoisie were Hindus. This was due to their somewhat better economic condition, as compared to the Muslims, and to their taking to English education, which was a passport to government service and the professions. The Muslims were generally poorer. Most of the weavers, who had gone to the wall on account of the British destruction of Indian industries, were Muslims. In Bengal, which has the biggest Muslim population of any Indian province, they were poor tenants or small land-holders. The landlord was usually a Hindu and so was the village *bania*, who was the money-lender and the owner of the village store. The landlord and the *bania* were thus in a position to sit on the tenant and exploit him and they took full advantage of this position. It is well to remember this fact for in this lies the root cause of the tension between Hindu and Muslim.

In the same way the higher caste Hindus, especially in the South, exploited the so-called "depressed" classes, who were mostly workers on the land. The problem of

the depressed classes has been very much before us recently and especially since Bapu's fast. Untouchability has been attacked all along the front, and hundreds of temples and other places have been thrown open to these classes. But right down at the bottom of the question is this economic exploitation, and unless this goes the depressed classes will remain depressed. The untouchables have been agricultural serfs who were not allowed to own land. They had other disabilities also.

Although India as a whole and the masses grew poorer, the handful of persons comprising the new bourgeoisie prospered to some extent because they shared in the country's exploitation. The lawyers and other professional people and the merchants accumulated some money. They wanted to invest this, so that they could have an income from interest. Many of them bought up land from the impoverished landlords and thus they became themselves landowners. Others, seeing the wonderful prosperity of English industry, wanted to invest their money in factories in India. So Indian capital went into these big machine factories and an Indian industrial capitalist class began to arise. This was about fifty years ago, after 1880.

As this bourgeoisie grew, their appetite also grew. They wanted to get on, to make more money, to have more posts in government service, more facilities for starting factories. They found the British obstructing them in every path. All the high posts were monopolised by the British, and industry was run for the profit of the British. So they began agitating and this was the origin of the new nationalist movement. After the revolt of 1857 and its cruel suppression people had been too much broken up for any agitation or aggressive movement. It took them many years to revive a little.

Nationalist ideas were soon enough in the air and Bengal was taking the lead. In 1872 a Bengali, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, wrote a novel called *Ananda Matha*. This book embodied these ideas and spread them still further. It was a new type of book in Bengali, and it

had great influence on the language as well as on the development of nationalism in Bengal. It was in this book that our famous song *Vande Matram* occurs. I might mention here that a dozen years before *Ananda Matha*, a Bengali poem had come out which created a stir. This was called *Nīl Darpan*—the mirror of indigo. It gave a very painful account of the miseries of the Bengal peasantry under the plantation system, of which I have told you something.

Meanwhile the power of Indian capital was also increasing and it demanded more elbow room to grow. At last in 1885 all these various elements of the new bourgeoisie determined to start an organisation to plead their cause. Thus was the Indian National Congress, founded in 1885. This organisation, which you and every boy and girl in India know well, became in recent years great and powerful. It took up the cause of the masses and became, to some extent, their champion. It challenged the very basis of British rule in India, and led great mass movements against it. It raised the banner of independence and fought for freedom manfully. And to-day it is still carrying on the fight. But all this is subsequent history. The National Congress when it was first founded was a very moderate and cautious body, affirming its loyalty to the British and asking, very politely, for some petty reforms. It represented the richer bourgeoisie; even the poorer middle classes were not in it. As for the masses, the peasants and workers, they had nothing to do with it. It was the organ of the English educated classes chiefly, and it carried on its activities in our step-mother tongue—the English language. Its demands were the demands of the landlords and Indian capitalists and the educated unemployed seeking for jobs. Little attention was paid to the grinding poverty of the masses or their needs. It demanded the “Indianisation” of the services, that is to say, the greater employment of Indians in government service in place of Englishmen. It did not see that what was wrong with India was the machine which exploited

the people, and it made no difference who had charge of the machine, Indian or foreigner. The Congress further complained of the huge expenses of the English officials in the military and civil services, and of the "drain" of gold and silver from India to England.

Do not think that in pointing out how moderate the early Congress was I am criticising it or trying to belittle it. That is not my purpose, for I believe that the Congress in those days and its leaders did great work. The hard facts of Indian politics drove it from step to step, almost unwillingly, to a more and more extreme position. But in the early days it could not have been anything but what it was. And for those days it required great courage for its founders to go ahead. It is easy enough for us to talk bravely of freedom when the crowd is with us and praises us for it. But it is very difficult to be the pioneer in a great undertaking.

The first Congress was held in Bombay in 1885. W. C. Banerji of Bengal was the first president. Other prominent names of those early days are Surendra Nath Banerji, Badruddin Tyabji, Pherozeshah Mehta. But one name towers above all others—that of Dadabhai Naoroji, who became the *Grand Old Man of India* and who first used the word "Swaraj" for India's goal. You should know this name well, for his grandchildren are dear friends and comrades of ours, and we take refuge in his house whenever we go to Bombay. One other name I shall tell you for he is the sole survivor to-day of the old guard of the Congress, and you know him well. He is Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. For over fifty years he has laboured in India's cause, and, worn down with years and anxiety, he labours still for the realisation of the dream he dreamed in the days of his youth.

So the Congress went on from year to year and gained in strength. It was not narrow in its appeal as the Hindu nationalism of an earlier day. But still it was in the main Hindu. Some leading Muslims joined it and even presided over it, but the Muslims as a whole kept away. A great Muslim leader of the day was

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. He saw that lack of education, and especially modern education, had injured the Muslims greatly and kept them backward. He felt therefore that he must convince them to take to this education and to concentrate on it, before dabbling in politics. So he advised the Muslims to keep away from the Congress, and he co-operated with the government and founded a fine college in Aligarh, which has since grown into a university. Sir Syed's advice was followed by the great majority of the Muslims who did not join the Congress. But a small minority was always with it. Remember that when I refer to majorities and minorities I mean the majority or minority of the upper middle class, English-educated, Muslims and Hindus. The masses, both Hindu and Muslim, had nothing to do with the Congress and very few had even heard of it in those days. Even the lower middle classes were not affected by it then.

The Congress grew, but even faster than the Congress grew the ideas of nationality and the desire for freedom. The Congress appeal was necessarily limited because it was confined to the English-knowing people. To some extent this helped in bringing different provinces nearer to each other and developing a common outlook. But because it did not go down deep to the people, it had little strength. I have told you in another letter of an occurrence which stirred Asia greatly. This was the victory of little Japan over giant Russia in 1904-5. India, in common with other Asiatic countries was vastly impressed, that is, the educated middle classes were impressed, and their self-confidence grew. If Japan could make good against one of the most powerful European countries why not India? For long the Indian people had suffered from a feeling of inferiority before the British. The long domination by the British, the savage suppression of the Revolt of 1857, had cowed them. By an Arms Act they were prevented from keeping arms. In everything that happened in India they were reminded that they were the subject race, the

inferior race. Even the education that was given them filled them with this idea of inferiority. Perverted and false history taught them that India was a land where anarchy had always prevailed, and Hindus and Muslims had cut each other's throats, till the British came to rescue the country from this miserable plight and give it peace and prosperity. Indeed the whole of Asia, the Europeans believed and proclaimed, regardless of fact or history, was a backward continent which must remain under European domination.

The Japanese victory, therefore, was a great pick-me-up for Asia. And in India it lessened the feeling of inferiority, from which most of us suffered. Nationalist ideas spread more widely, especially in Bengal and Maharashtra. Just then an event took place which shook Bengal to the depths and stirred the whole of India. The British government divided up the great province of Bengal (which at that time included Behar) into two parts, one of these being Eastern Bengal. The growing nationalism of the bourgeoisie in Bengal resented it. It suspected that the British wanted to weaken them by thus dividing them. Eastern Bengal had a majority of Muslims, so by this division a Hindu-Muslim question was also raised. A great anti-British movement rose in Bengal. Most of the land-holders joined it, and so did Indian capitalists. The cry of *Swadeshi* was first raised then, and with it the boycott of British goods, which of course helped Indian industry and capital. The movement even spread to the masses to some extent, and partly it drew its inspiration from Hinduism. Side by side with it there arose in Bengal a school of revolutionary violence, and the bomb first made its appearance in Indian politics. Aurobindo Ghose was one of the brilliant leaders of the Bengal movement. He still lives but for many years he has lived a retired life in Pondichery, which is in French India.

In Western India, in the Maharashtra country, there was also a great ferment at this time and a revival of an aggressive nationalism, tinged also with Hinduism. A

great leader arose there, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, known throughout India as the Lokamanya, the honoured of the people. Tilak was a great scholar, learned alike in the old ways of the East and the new ways of the West; he was a great politician; but above all he was a great mass leader. The leaders of the National Congress had so far appealed only to the English-educated Indians; they were little known by the masses. Tilak was the first political leader of the new India who reached the masses and drew strength from them. His dynamic personality brought a new element of strength and indomitable courage and added to the new spirit of nationalism and sacrifice in Bengal, changed the face of Indian politics.

What was the Congress doing during these stirring days of 1906 and 1907 and 1908? The Congress leaders, far from leading the nation at this awakening of the national spirit, hung back. They were used to a quieter brand of politics in which the masses did not intrude. They did not like the flaming enthusiasm of Bengal, nor did they feel at home with the new unbending spirit of Maharashtra, as embodied in Tilak. They praised Swadeshi but hesitated at the boycott of British goods. Two parties developed in the Congress—the extremists under Tilak and some Bengal leaders and the moderates under the older Congress leaders. The most prominent of the moderate leaders was, however, a young man, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, a very able man who had devoted his life to service. Gokhale was also from Maharashtra. Tilak and he faced each other from their rival groups and, inevitably, the split came in 1907 and the Congress was divided. The moderates continued to control the Congress, the extremists were driven out. The moderates won, but it was at the cost of their popularity in the country, for Tilak's party was far the more popular with the people. The Congress became weak and for some years had little influence.

And what of the government during these years? How did it react to the growth of Indian nationalism? Governments have only one method of meeting an

argument or a demand which they do not like—the use of the bludgeon. So government indulged in repression and sent people to prison, and curbed the newspapers with press laws, and let loose crowds of secret police men and spies to shadow everybody they did not like. Since those days the members of the C. I. D. in India have been the constant companions of prominent Indian politicians. Many of the Bengal leaders were sentenced to imprisonment. The most noted trial was that of Lokamanya Tilak who was sentenced to six years, and who during his imprisonment in Mandalay, wrote a famous book. Lala Lajpat Rai was also deported to Burma.

But repression did not succeed in crushing Bengal. So a measure of reform in the administration was hurried up to appease some people at least. The policy was then, as it was later, and is now, to split up the nationalist ranks. The moderates were to be “rallied” and the extremists crushed. In 1908 these new reforms, called the Morley-Minto reforms, were announced. They succeeded in “rallying the moderates” who were pleased with them. The extremists, with their leaders in jail, were demoralised and the national movement weakened. In Bengal, however, the partition agitation continued and ended with success. In 1911 the British government reversed the partition of Bengal. This triumph put new heart in the Bengalis. But the movement of 1907 had spent itself out, and India relapsed into political apathy.

In 1911 also it was proclaimed that Delhi was to be the new capital—Delhi, the seat of many an empire, and the grave also of many an empire.

So India stood in 1914 when the World War broke out in Europe and ended the hundred year period. That war also affected India tremendously, but of that I shall have something to say later.

I have done, at long last, with India in the nineteenth century. I have brought you to within eighteen years to-day. And now we must leave India and, in the next letter, go to China and examine another type of imperialist exploitation.

BRITAIN FORCES OPIUM ON CHINA

December 14, 1932

I have told you, at considerable length, of the effect of the Industrial and Mechanical Revolution on India, and of how the new imperialism worked in India. Being an Indian, I am a partisan and, I am afraid, I cannot help taking a partisan view. But I have tired, and I should like you to try, to consider these questions as a scientist impartially examining facts, and not as a nationalist out to prove one side of the case. Nationalism is good in its place, but it is an unreliable friend and an unsafe historian. It blinds us to many happenings and sometimes distorts the truth, especially when it concerns us or our country. So we have to be wary, when considering the recent history of India, lest we cast all the blame for our misfortunes on the British. After all, as some body has said, a people gets the government it deserves.

Having seen how India was exploited in the nineteenth century by the industrialists and capitalists of Britain, let us go to the other great country of Asia, India's old-time friend, that ancient among nations, China. We shall find here a different type of exploitation by the west. China did not become a colony or dependency of any European country, as India did. She escaped this, as she had a strong enough central government to hold the country together, and after some resistance to the foreign invader, till about the middle of the nineteenth century. India, as we have seen, had gone to pieces more than a hundred years before this, when the Mughal Empire fell. China grew weak in the nineteenth century but still it held together to the last,

and the jealousy of each other of the foreign powers, prevented one of them from taking too much advantage of China's weakness.

In my last letter on China (it was number 94) I told you of the attempts made by the British to increase their trade with China. I gave you a long quotation from the very superior and patronising letter written by the Manchu Emperor Chien Sung in answer to the English king George III. This was in 1792. This date will remind you of the stormy times that Europe was having then—it was the period of the French Revolution. And this was followed by Napoleon and the Napoleonic wars. England had her hands full during this whole period and was fighting desperately against Napoleon. There was no question thus of an extension of the China trade for her till Napoleon fell and England breathed with relief. Soon after, however, in 1816 another British embassy was sent to China. But there was some difficulty about the ceremonial to be observed and the Chinese emperor refused to see the British envoy, Lord Amherst, and ordered him to go back. The ceremony to be performed was called the *Kotow*, which is a kind of prostration on the ground. Perhaps you have heard of the word “Kow-towing.”

So nothing happened. Meanwhile a new trade was rapidly growing, the trade in opium. It is not perhaps correct to call this a new trade as opium was first imported from India as early as the fifteenth century. India had sent in the past many a good thing to China. Opium was one of the really bad things sent by her. But the trade was limited. It grew in the nineteenth century because of the Europeans, and especially the East India Company, which had a monopoly of the British trade. It is said that the Dutch in the East used to mix it with their tobacco and then smoke it as a preventive of malaria. Through them opium smoking went to China, but in a worse form, for in China pure opium was smoked. The Chinese government wanted to stop the habit because of its bad effect on the people,

and also because the opium trade took away a lot of money from the country.

In 1800 the Chinese government issued an edict or order prohibiting all importation of opium for any purpose whatsoever. But the trade was a very profitable one for the foreigners. They continued to smuggle opium into the country and bribed Chinese officials to overlook this. The Chinese government thereupon made a rule that their officials were not to meet foreign merchants. Severe penalties were also laid down for teaching the Chinese or Manchu languages to any foreigner. But all this was to no purpose. The opium trade continued and probably there was a great deal of bribery and corruption. Indeed matters became worse after 1834 when the British government put an end to the monopoly of the East India Company in the China trade, and threw this open to all British merchants.

There was a sudden increase in opium smuggling, and the Chinese government at last decided to take strong action to suppress it. They chose a good man for this purpose. Lin Tse-hsi was appointed a special commissioner to suppress the smuggling, and he took swift and vigorous action. (He went down to Canton in the south, which was the chief centre for this illegal trade, and ordered all the foreign merchants there to deliver to him all the opium they had.) They refused to obey the order at first. Thereupon Lin forced them to obey. He cut them off in their factories, made their Chinese workers and servants leave them, and allowed no food to go to them from outside. This vigour and thoroughness resulted in the foreign merchants coming to terms and handing over to the Chinese twenty thousand cases of opium. Lin had this huge quantity of opium, which was obviously meant for smuggling purposes, destroyed. Lin also told the foreign merchants that no ship would be allowed to enter Canton unless the captain gave an undertaking that he would not bring opium. If this promise was broken the Chinese government would confiscate the ship and its entire cargo. Commissioner

Lin was a thorough person. He did the work entrusted to him well, but he did not realise that the consequences were going to be hard on China.

The consequences were: war with Britain, defeat of China, a humiliating treaty; and opium, the very thing the Chinese government wanted to prohibit, forced down their throats. Whether opium was good or bad for the Chinese was immaterial. What the Chinese government wanted to do did not much matter; but what did matter was that smuggling opium into China was a very profitable job for British merchants, and Britain was not prepared to tolerate the loss of this income. Most of the opium destroyed by commissioner Lin belonged to British merchants. So, in the name of national honour, Britain went to war with China in 1840. This war is rightly called the Opium War for it was fought and won for the right of forcing opium on China.

China could do little against the British fleet which blockaded Canton and other places. After two years she was forced to submit, and in 1842 the Treaty of Nanking laid down that five ports were to be opened to foreign trade, which meant especially the opium trade then. These five ports were Canton, Shanghai, Amoy, Ningpo and Foochow. They were called the "treaty ports". Britain also took possession of the island of Hong Kong, near Canton, and extorted a large sum of money as compensation for the opium that had been destroyed, and for the costs of the war which she had forced on China.

Thus the British achieved the victory of opium. The Chinese Emperor made a personal appeal to Queen Victoria, England's queen at the time, pointing out with all courtesy the terrible effects of the opium trade which was now forced on China. There was no reply from the Queen. Just fifty years earlier his predecessor, Chien Lung, had written very differently to the king of England!

This was the beginning of China's troubles with the

imperialist powers of the west. Her isolation was at an end. She had to accept foreign trade; and she had to accept, in addition, Christian missionaries. These missionaries played an important part in China as the vanguard of imperialism. Many of China's subsequent troubles had something to do with missionaries. Their behaviour was often insolent and exasperating, but they could not be tried by Chinese courts. Under the new treaty, foreigners from the West were not subject to Chinese law or Chinese justice. They were tried by their own courts. This was called "extra-territoriality", and it still exists and is much resented. The converts of the missionaries also claimed this special protection of "extra-territoriality". They were in no way entitled to it; but that made no difference as the great missionary, the representative of a powerful imperialist nation, was behind them. Thus village was sometimes set against village, and when, exasperated beyond measure, the villagers or others rose and attacked the missionary, and sometimes killed him. Then the imperialist power behind swooped down and took signal reparation. Few occurrences have been so profitable to European powers as the murders of their missionaries in China! For they made each such murder the occasion for demanding and extorting further privileges.

It was also a convert to Christianity who started one of the most terrible and cruel rebellions in China. This was the Taiping Rebellion, started about 1850 by a half-mad person, Hung Hsin-Chuan. This religious maniac had extraordinary success and went about with the war-cry "kill the idolaters", and vast numbers of people were killed. The rebellion devastated more than half China, and during a dozen years or so it is estimated that at least twenty million people died on account of it! It is not right of course to hold the Christian missionaries or the foreign powers responsible for this outbreak and the massacres which accompanied it. At first the missionaries seemed to bless it but later they repudiated Hung. The Chinese government, however,

continued to believe that the Christian missionaries were responsible for it. This belief makes us realise how greatly the Chinese resented missionary activities then, and later. To them the missionary did not come as a messenger of religion and good will. He was the agent of imperialism. As an English author has said: "First the missionary, then the gun-boat, then the land-grabbing—this is the procession of events in the Chinese mind." It is well to bear this in mind as the missionary crops up often enough in Chinese troubles.

It is extraordinary that a rebellion led by a mad fanatic should have had such great success before it was finally suppressed. The real reason for this was that the old order in China was breaking up. In my last letter on China, I think I told you of the burden of taxation and the changing economic conditions and the growing discontent of the people. Secret societies were rising everywhere against the Manchu government, and there was rebellion in the air. Foreign trade, the trade in opium and other articles, made matters worse. Foreign trade China had had of course in the past. But now the conditions were different. The big machine industry of the west was turning out goods fast and these could not all be sold at home. So they had to find markets elsewhere. This was the urge for markets in India as well as in China. These goods, and especially opium, upset the old trade arrangements, and thus made the economic confusion worse. As in India, the price of articles in the China bazaars began to be affected by the world prices. All this added to the discontent and misery of the people and strengthened the Taiping Rebellion.

This was the background in China during these days of growing arrogance and interference by the western powers. It is not surprising that China could do little to withstand their demands. These European powers, and much later Japan, as we shall see, took full advantage of China's confusion and difficulties to extort privileges and territory from her. China, indeed, would have gone

the way of India, and become the dependency and empire of one or more of the Western powers and Japan, but for the mutual rivalry of these powers and their jealousy of each other.

I have strayed from my main story in telling you about this general background, during the nineteenth century in China, of economic breakdown, Taiping Rebellion, missionaries, and foreign aggression. But one must know something of this to be able to follow intelligently the narrative of events. For events in history do not just happen like miracles. They occur because a variety of causes lead up to them. But these causes are often not obvious; they lie under the surface of events. The Manchu rulers of China, till recently so great and powerful, must have been amazed at the sudden change of fortune's wheel. They did not see, probably, that the roots of their collapse lay in their own past; they did not appreciate the industrial progress of the west and its disastrous consequences on China's economic system. They resented greatly the intrusions of the "barbarian" foreigners. The emperor at the time, referring to these intrusions, used a delightful old Chinese phrase; he said that he would allow no man to snore alongside of his bed! But the wisdom and humour of the old classics, though they taught a serene confidence and a magnificent fortitude in misfortune, were not enough to repel the foreigner.

The treaty of Nanking opened the door to Britain in China. But Britain was not going to have all the fat plums to herself. France and the United States stepped in and also made commercial treaties with China. China was helpless, and this compulsion exercised on her did not make her love or respect the foreigner. She resented the very presence of these "barbarians". The foreigner, on his side, was still far from content. His appetite for exploiting China grew. The British again took the lead.

✓ It was a very favourable time for the foreigners, as China was busy with the Taiping Rebellion and could offer no resistance. So the British set about to find a

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pretext for war. In 1856 the Chinese Viceroy of Canton had the Chinese crew of a ship arrested for piracy. The ship belonged to Chinamen, and no foreigner was involved. But it flew the British flag because of a permit from the Hong Kong government. As it happened even this permit had expired. None the less, as in the fable of the wolf and the lamb at the river, the British government made this the excuse for war.

Troops were sent to China from England. Just then the Indian Revolt of 1857 broke out, and all these troops were diverted to India. The China War had to wait till the Revolt was crushed. In 1858 this second China war began. The French, meanwhile, had also discovered a pretext for taking part in it, for a French missionary had been killed somewhere in China. So the English and the French swooped down on the Chinese, who had their hands full with the Taiping Rebellion. The British and the French governments tried to induce Russia and the United States of America to join them, but they did not agree. They were quite prepared, however, to share in the loot! There was practically no fighting and new treaties, extorting more privileges, were signed by all the four powers with China. More ports were opened to foreign trade.

But the story of the Second China War is not yet over. There was another act to the play with a still more tragic sequel to it. When treaties are made it is customary for the governments concerned to ratify or confirm them. It was arranged that this ratification of the new treaties should take place within a year at Peking. When the time came for this, the Russian envoy came direct to Peking, overland from Russia. The other three came by sea and wanted to bring their boats up the river Peiko to Peking. This city was being threatened by the Taiping rebels just then and the river had therefore been fortified. The Chinese government therefore asked the British, French and American envoys not to come by the river route but to travel by a land route further north. It was not an unreasonable request.

The American agreed to it. Not so the British and French envoys. They tried to force their way up the Peiko river inspite of the fortifications. The Chinese fired upon them and forced them back with heavy losses.

Arrogant and over-proud governments, which would not even listen to a request from the Chinese government to change their travel route, could not tolerate this smack on the face. More troops were sent for to take vengeance. In 1860 they marched on the old city of Peking, and their vengeance took the form of the destruction and looting and burning of one of the most wonderful buildings in the city. This was the Imperial Summer Palace, the Yuen-Ming-Yuen, completed in the reign of Chien Lung. It was full of rare treasures of art and literature, the finest that China had produced. There were old bronzes of great beauty, and amazingly fine porcelain, and rare manuscripts, and pictures and every kind of curio and work of art for which China had been famous for a thousand years. The Anglo-French soldiery, ignorant vandals that they were, looted these treasures and destroyed them in huge bonfires which kept burning for many days! Is it any wonder that the Chinese, with a culture of thousands of years behind them, looked upon this vandalism with anguish in their hearts, and considered the wreckers ignorant barbarians who only knew how to kill and destroy? And memories of the Huns and the Mongols and many other old time barbarian wreckers must have come to them.

But the foreign "barbarians" cared little what the Chinese thought of them. They felt secure in their gun-boats and with their modern weapons of war. What did it matter to them that the rich and rare treasures which had been collected during hundreds of years were no more? What did they care for Chinese art and culture?

"Whatever happens,
We have got
The Maxim gun,
And they have not!"

CHINA IN DIFFICULTIES

December 24, 1932

In my last letter I told you of the destruction by the British and French of the wonderful Summer Palace of Peking in 1860. This was done, it is said, as a punishment for a Chinese violation of a flag of truce. It may have been true that some Chinese troops had been guilty of such an offence, but still the deliberate vandalism of the British and French almost passes one's comprehension. This was not the act of some ignorant soldiers, but of the men in authority. Why do such things happen? The English and the French are civilized and cultured peoples, in many ways the leaders of modern civilization. And yet these people, who in private life are decent and considerate, forget all their civilisation and decency in their public dealings and conflicts with other people. There seems to be a strange contrast between the behaviour of individuals to each other and the behaviour of nations. Children and boys and girls are taught not to be too selfish, to think of others, to behave properly. All our education is meant to teach us this lesson, and to a small extent we learn it. And then comes war, and we forget our old lesson and the brute in us shows his face. So decent people behave like brutes.

This is so even when two kindred nations, like the French and Germans, fight each other. But it is far worse when different races are in conflict; when the European faces the races and peoples of Asia and Africa. The different races know little of each other, for each is a closed book to the other; and where there is ignorance there is no fellow-feeling. Racial hatred and bitterness increase, and when there is a conflict between two races,

it is not only a political war but something far worse, a racial war. This explains to some extent the horrors of the Indian Revolt of 1857, and the cruelty and vandalism of the dominant European powers in Asia and Africa.

It all seems very sad and very silly. But where there is the domination of one nation over another, one people over another, one class over another, there is bound to be discontent and friction and revolt, and an attempt by the exploited nation or people or class to get rid of its exploiter. And this exploitation of one by another is the very basis of our present day society, which is called capitalism, and out of which imperialism has emerged.

In the nineteenth century the big machines and industrial progress had made the western European nations and the United States of America wealthy and powerful. They began to think that they were the lords of the earth and the other races were far inferior to them and must make way for them. Having gained some control over the forces of nature, they became arrogant and overbearing to others. They forgot that civilized man must not only control nature but must also control himself. And so we see in this nineteenth century progressive races, ahead of others in many ways, often behaving in a manner which would put a backward savage to shame. This may perhaps help you to understand the behaviour of European races in Asia and Africa, not only in last century, but even to-day.

Do not imagine that I am comparing the European races to ourselves or to other races to our advantage. Far from it. We all have our dark spots, and some of ours are pretty bad; or else we might not have fallen quite so low as we have done. Even as I write, the question which fills my mind is Bapu's impending fast in order to gain the right of temple entry for our suppressed classes, or *Harijans* as they are now called. I am not much interested in their going or not going to the temples. But to keep them forcibly out is to brand them as inferior and unclean beings, and this question

has thus become a test one. So long as we have not settled finally that there should be no such suppressed or exploited classes amongst us, we have little right to complain if others treat us in the same way.

We shall go back to China now. The British and French had given a demonstration of their might by destroying the Summer Palace. They followed this up by forcing China to ratify the old treaties and extorted fresh privileges out of her. In Shanghai the Chinese customs service was organised under foreign officials by the Chinese government under these treaties. This was called the "Imperial maritime customs."

Meanwhile the Taiping Rebellion which had enfeebled China and thus given an opportunity to the foreign powers, was still dragging on. At last, in 1864, it was finally put down by a Chinese governor, Li Hung Chang, who became a leading statesman of China.

While England and France extorted privileges and concessions out of China by terrorism, Russia in the north achieved a remarkable success by more peaceful methods. Only a few years before, Russia, hungry for the possession of Constantinople, had attacked Turkey in Europe. England and France were afraid of Russia's growing strength, and so they joined the Turks and defeated Russia in what is known as the Crimean War of 1854—56. Defeated in the west, Russia began to look East and had great success. China was persuaded by peaceful means to cede to Russia a province in the north-east, adjoining the sea, with the city and harbour of Vladivostok. This triumph for Russia was due to a brilliant young Russian officer Muravieff. In this way, Russia gained far more by friendly methods than England and France had gained after their three years' war and insensate destruction.

So matters stood in 1860. The great Chinese Empire of the Manchus, which, by the end of the eighteenth century, covered and dominated nearly half Asia, was now humbled and disgraced. Western powers from distant Europe had defeated and humiliated them;

an internal rebellion had almost upset the Empire. All this shook up China completely. It was obvious that all was not well and some effort was made to reorganise the country to meet the new conditions and the foreign menace. So this year 1860 might almost be considered the beginning of a new era when China prepares to resist foreign aggression. China's neighbour, Japan, was similarly occupied at this time and this also served as an example. Japan succeeded far more than China, but for a while, China did hold back the foreign powers.

A Chinese mission, under an American named Burlingame, who was a warm friend of China, was sent to the treaty powers, and he succeeded in getting somewhat better terms from them. A new Chinese-American treaty was signed in 1868, and it is interesting to find in this that the Chinese government agreed, as a favour and a concession to the United States, to permit immigration of Chinese workers to the States. The United States were busy then developing their western Pacific States especially California, and labour was scarce there. So they took Chinese labour across. But this became the source of fresh trouble. The Americans began to object to cheap Chinese labour and there was friction between the two governments. The United States government later stopped Chinese immigration, and this humiliating treatment was greatly resented by the Chinese people who boycotted American goods. But all this is a long story which brings us into the twentieth century. We need not go into it.

The Taiping Rebellion had hardly been crushed when another revolt broke out against the Manchus. This was not in China proper but in the far west, in Turkestan, the centre of Asia. This was largely inhabited by Muslims and the Muslim tribes, under a leader named Yakub Beg, rose in 1863 and drove out the Chinese authorities. This local revolt has interest for us for two reasons. Russia tried to take advantage of it by seizing Chinese territory. This of course was a well established European manœuvre whenever China was in

difficulties. But, to every one's surprise, China refused to agree and ultimately made Russia disgorge. This was due to an extraordinary campaign by the Chinese general Tso Tsung-tang in Central Asia against Yakub Beg. This general took matters in a most leisurely fashion. He marched slowly allowing year after year to pass by before he reached the rebels. Twice he actually halted his army long enough to plant and reap a crop of grain to provide for its use! The problem of keeping of food supplies for an army is always a difficult one, and this must have been formidable when the Gobi desert had to be crossed. So General Tso solved it in a novel way. He then defeated Yakub Beg and put an end to the rebellion. His campaign in Kashgar and Turfan and Yarkand, etc., is said, from a military point of view, to have been a wonderful one.

Having settled satisfactorily with Russia in Central Asia, the Chinese government soon had trouble in another part of their wide-flung but disintegrating empire. This was in Annam, which was a vassal state of China. The French had designs over it, and there was fighting between China and France. Again, to every one's surprise, China did rather well and was not cowed down by France. There was a satisfactory treaty in 1885.

The imperialist powers were sufficiently impressed by these new signs of strength in China. It seemed as if she was recovering from her weakness of 1860 and before. There was talk of reform, and many people thought that she had turned the corner. It was because of this that England when annexing Burma in 1886 promised to send every ten years the customary tribute to China.

But China was far from the corner yet. There was still a great deal of humiliation and suffering and disruption in store for her. What was wrong with her was not merely the weakness of the army or navy, but something which went far deeper. Her whole social and economic structure was going to pieces. As I have told

you already, it was in a bad way early in the nineteenth century when many secret societies were formed against the Manchus. Foreign trade and the effects of contact with industrialised countries made matters worse. The appearance of strength which came over China after 1860 had little reality behind it. There were some local reforms by energetic officials here and there, especially by Li Hung Chang. But these could not touch the roots of the problem or cure the disease which enfeebled China.

The chief reason for the outward showing of strength by China during these years was the presence at the head of affairs of a strong ruler. This was a remarkable woman, the Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi. She was only 26 when power came into her hands as the nominal emperor was her infant son. For forty-seven years she ruled China with vigour. She chose efficient officials and impressed them with some part of her own vigour. It was largely due to this and to her that China made a braver show of strength than she had done for many a year.

But meanwhile, across the narrow seas, Japan was performing wonders and changing out of all recognition. To Japan, therefore, we must now go.

JAPAN RUSHES AHEAD

December 27, 1932

It is long since I wrote to you about Japan. Over five months ago I told you (in letter 81) of the strange way in which this country shut herself up in the seventeenth century. From 1641, for over two hundred years, the people of Japan lived cut off from the rest of the world. These two hundred years saw great changes in Europe and Asia and America and even in Africa. Of some of the stirring events that took place during this period, I have already told you. But no news of them reached this secluded nation; no breath from outside came to disturb the old-world feudal air of Japan. Almost, it seemed, as if the march of time and change had been stayed, and the mid-seventeenth century held captive. For though time rolled on, the picture seemed to remain the same. It was feudal Japan with the land-owning class in power. The emperor had little power; the real ruler was the Shogun, the head of a great clan. Like the Kshattriyas in India, there was a warrior class called Samurai. The feudal lords and the Samurai were the ruling class. Often different lords and clans quarrelled with each other. But all of them joined in oppressing and exploiting the peasantry and all others.

Still, Japan had peace. After the long civil wars which had exhausted the country this peace was very welcome. Some of the great warring nobles—the Daimyos—were suppressed. Slowly Japan began to recover from the ravages of civil war. People's minds turned more to industry and art and literature and religion. Christianity had been suppressed; Buddhism

revived, and later Shinto, which is a typical Japanese worship of ancestors. Confucius, the sage of China, became the ideal to be looked up to in matters of social behaviour and morals. Art flourished in the circles of the court and the nobility. In some ways the picture was one of the middle ages of Europe.

But it is not so easy to keep out change, and though outside contacts were stopped, inside Japan itself change worked, though more slowly than it might otherwise have done. As in other countries the feudal order went towards economic collapse. Discontent grew, and the *Shogun*, being at the head of affairs, became the target for this. The growth of Shinto worship made people look more to the emperor, who was supposed to be the direct descendant of the Sun. Thus a spirit of nationalism grew out of the prevailing discontents, and this spirit, based as it was on an economic breakdown, would have inevitably led to a change and the opening of Japan to the world.

Many attempts had been made by foreign powers to open Japan, but they had all failed. About the middle of the nineteenth century the United States of America became especially interested in this. They had just spread out to the west in California, and San Francisco was becoming an important port. The newly opened trade with China was inviting, but the journey across the Pacific was a long one. So they wanted to call at a Japanese port to break this long journey and take supplies. This was the reason for America's repeated attempts to open up Japan.

In 1853 an American squadron came to Japan with a letter from the American president. These were the first steamships seen in Japan. A year later the Shogun agreed to open two ports. The British, Russians and Dutch, learning of this, came soon after and also made similar treaties with the Shogun. So Japan was open again to the world after 213 years.

But there was trouble ahead. The Shogun had posed as the Emperor before the foreign powers. He

was no longer popular and a great agitation rose against him and his foreign treaties. Some foreigners were also killed and this resulted in a naval attack by the foreign powers. The position became more and more difficult and ultimately the Shogun was prevailed upon to resign his office in 1867. Thus ended the Tokugawa Shogunate which, you may or may not remember, began with Iyeyasu in 1603. Not only that, but the whole system of the Shogunate, which has lasted for nearly seven hundred years, came to an end.

The new emperor now came into his own. He was a boy of 14 who had just succeeded to the throne as the emperor Mutsuhito. For forty-five years he reigned, from 1867 to 1912, and this period is known as the Meiji (or "enlightened rule") era. It was during his reign that Japan rushed ahead, and copying western nations, became their equal in many respects. This vast change brought about in a generation is remarkable and without parallel in history. Japan became a great industrial nation and, after the manner of the western powers, an imperialistic and predatory nation. She bore all the outward signs of progress. In industry she even went ahead of her teachers. Her population increased rapidly. Her ships went round the globe. She became a Great Power whose voice was heard with respect in international affairs. And yet all this mighty change did not go very deep down into the heart of the nation. It would be wrong to call the changes superficial for they were far more than that. But the outlook of the rulers still remained feudal and they sought to combine radical reform with this feudal shell. They seemed to succeed to a large extent. But already it is possible to say that they did not succeed in this strange combination, and Japan to-day appears to be at the brink of disaster. The feudal shell has already partly gone. What remains cannot survive for long.

The people who were responsible for these great changes in Japan were a band of far-seeing men of the nobility—the "Elder Statesmen" they were called.

When the anti-foreign riots in Japan were followed by bombardment by the foreign warships, the Japanese saw their helplessness and felt bitterly humiliated. Instead of cursing their fate and tearing their hair, they decided to learn a lesson from this defeat and degradation. The Elder Statesmen chalked out a programme of reform and they stuck to it.

The old feudal daimios were abolished. The capital of the emperor was taken from Kyoto to Zedo, which was now renamed Tokyo. A new constitution was announced with two houses of parliament the lower house was elected, the upper nominated. There were changes in education, law, industry and in almost everything. Factories grew up, and a modern army and navy was formed. Experts were sent for from foreign countries, and Japanese students were sent to Europe and America, not to become barristers and the like as Indians have done in the past, but to become scientists and technical experts.

All this was done by the Elder Statesmen in the name of the emperor, who inspite of the new Parliament and all else, remained in law the absolute ruler of the Japanese empire. And at the same time as they pushed these reforms, they spread the cult of emperor worship. It was a strange combination: factories and modern industry and a semblance of parliamentary government on the one side, and a medieval worship of the divine emperor on the other. It is difficult to understand how the two could go together even for a short while. Yet they did march together, and even to-day they have not separated. The Elder Statesmen utilised this great feeling for reverence for the emperor in two ways. They forced the reforms on the conservative and feudal classes who would otherwise have resisted them but were cowed down by the prestige of the emperor's name; and they held back the more progressive elements who wanted to go faster and get rid of all feudalism.

The contrast between China and Japan during this last half of the nineteenth century is remarkable. Japan

rapidly westernised herself; China, as we have seen and shall see even more later on, got involved in the most extraordinary difficulties. Why did this happen? The very vastness of China, her great population and area, made change difficult. India also suffers from this seeming source of strength—huge area and population. It is difficult to get an elephant to move but when it moves it has far greater strength and momentum than a smaller animal. China's government also was not very centralised, that is to say, each part of the country had a great deal of self-government. It was thus not easy for the central government to interfere and bring about big changes as had been done in Japan. Then again China's great civilisation had grown up in thousands of years and was too closely tied up with her to be easily discarded. Again we can compare India to China. Japan, on the other hand had borrowed Chinese civilization and could more easily replace it. Another reason for China's difficulties was the continual interference of European powers. China was a great continental country. It could not shut herself up as the islands of Japan had done. Russia touched her territories to the north and north-west; England in the south-west; France was creeping up in the south. These European powers had managed to extort important privileges from China and had developed great commercial interests. These interests gave them plenty of excuses for interference.

So Japan shot ahead while China was still blindly struggling on and trying, with little success, to adapt herself to the new conditions. And yet there is another strange fact worth noticing. Japan took to western machinery and industry and, with a modern army and navy, put on the garb of an advanced industrialised power. But she did not take so readily to the new thought and ideas of Europe; to notions of individual and social freedom; to a scientific outlook on life and society. At heart she remained feudal and authoritarian and tied up to a strange emperor worship which the rest

of the world had long outgrown. The passionate and self-sacrificing patriotism of the Japanese was closely allied to this loyalty to the emperor. Nationalism and the cult of the divine emperor went side by side. China, on the other hand, did not take readily to the big machinery and industry; but the Chinese, or at any rate modern China, welcomed western thought and ideas and scientific outlook. These were not so far removed from their own. Thus we see that although modern China entered more into the spirit of western civilization, Japan outpassed her because she put on the armour of it, ignoring the spirit. And all Europe praised Japan because she was strong in this armour, and they made her one of their fellowship. But China was weak and unprovided with enough maxim guns and the like. So they insulted her and sat on her and preached to her and exploited her, caring little for her thought and ideas.

Japan, not only followed Europe in industrial methods but also in imperialistic aggression.) She was more than a faithful pupil of the European Powers; she often improved on them! Her real difficulty was the discordance between the new industrialism and the old feudalism. In her attempts to carry on with both she could not have any approach to economic equilibrium. Taxation was very heavy and people grumbled. To prevent trouble at home she had recourse to an old device—distract attention by war and imperialistic adventures abroad. Her new industries also forced her to look for raw materials and markets to other countries, just as the Industrial Revolution had forced England, and later other western European powers, to look abroad and conquer. Production increased and there was a rapid growth of population. More and more food and raw materials were required. Where was she to get them? Her nearest neighbours were China and Korea. China offered opportunities for trade but she was a thickly populated country. In Manchuria, however, which formed the north eastern provinces of the Chinese empire, there was plenty of elbow room for development

and colonisation. So to Korea and Manchuria Japan looked hungrily.

Japan also saw with concern the western powers getting all manner of privileges from China and even trying to get territory. She did not like this at all. If these powers got well established on the mainland opposite to her, her safety might be imperilled and, at any rate, her growth on the continent would be checked. Besides, she wanted to take the lion's share of the loot.

In less than twenty years after her opening to the outer world, Japan began to be aggressive towards China. A petty dispute about some fishermen, who had been shipwrecked and were murdered, gave Japan an opportunity to demand compensation from China. China refused at first, but then threatened with war and, busy as she was at the time with the French in Annam, she gave in to Japan. This was in 1874. Japan was elated by this triumph and immediately looked round for further conquests. Korea seemed inviting and, picking up a quarrel with her for some petty reason, Japan invaded her and forced her to pay a sum of money and to open some ports for Japanese trade. Japan was proving herself to be a very apt pupil of the western powers!

Korea had long been a vassal state of China. She looked upon China for support but China was unable to help. The Chinese government fearing that Japan might acquire too much influence advised Korea to give in for the moment and also to make treaties with the western powers to checkmate Japan. So Korea was thrown open to the world by 1882. But Japan was not going to be satisfied with this. Taking advantage of China's difficulties, she again raised the Korean question and made China agree to a joint protectorate over Korea, that is, poor Korea became a vassal state of both the others. This was obviously a most unsatisfactory state of affairs for all concerned. There was bound to be trouble. Japan indeed wanted trouble, and in 1894 she

forced a war on China.

The Chino-Japanese War of 1894-95 was a runaway affair for Japan. Her army and navy were up to date; Chinese were still old-fashioned and inefficient. Japan won all along the line and forced a treaty on China, which put her on the same level as the western treaty powers. Korea was declared independent but this was only a veil for Japanese control. China was also forced to give to Japan the Liaotung peninsula in Manchuria with Port Arthur, as well as Formosa and some other islands.

This crushing defeat of China by little Japan surprised the world. The Western powers were by no means pleased at this rise of a powerful country in the Far East. Even during the Chino-Japanese War, when Japan was seen to be winning, she was warned by these powers that they would not consent to Japan annexing any port of the China's mainland. In spite of this warning she took the Liaotung peninsula with an important port—Port Arthur. But she was not allowed to keep this. Three great powers—Russia, Germany and France—insisted on her giving it up and, much to her annoyance and anger, she had to do so. She was not strong enough to face these three.

But Japan remembered this slight upon her. It rankled and made her prepare for a greater struggle. Nine years later this struggle came with Russia.

Meanwhile Japan, by her victory over China, has established her position as the strongest nation of the Far East. And China had appeared in all her weakness, and all fear of her vanished from the western powers. They swooped down on her like vultures on a dead or dying body and tried to get as much as possible for themselves. France, Russia, England and Germany—all scrambled for sea ports on the China coast and for privileges. There was an unholy and a most unseemly battle for concessions. Every little thing was made an excuse for claiming additional privileges or concessions. Because two missionaries were killed Germany seized by

force Kianchu in the Shantung peninsula in the east. Because Germany took this the other powers insisted on their share of the loot. Russia took Port Arthur, of which she had deprived Japan three years before. England took Wei-hai-wei to set off Russia's possession of Port Arthur. France also took a port and territory in Annam. Russia also got permission to build a railway across north Manchuria, an extension of the Trans-Siberian railway.

It was extraordinary—this shameless scramble. Of course China did not enjoy parting with territory or concessions. China was forced to agree on every occasion by displays of naval forces and threats of bombardment. What shall we call this scandalous behaviour? Highway robbery? Brigandage? It is the way of imperialism. Sometimes it works in secret; sometimes it covers its evil deeds under a cloak of pious sentiment and hypocritical pretence of doing good to others. But in China in 1898 there was no cloak or covering. The naked thing stood out in all its ugliness.

JAPAN DEFEATS RUSSIA

December 29, 1932

I have been writing to you about the Far East and I shall continue this story to-day. You may wonder why I seek to burden your mind with the wars and disputes of the past. They are not savoury subjects and they are over and done with. I do not want to lay stress on them. But much that is happening to-day in the Far East has its roots in these very troubles and some knowledge of them therefore is necessary to the understanding of modern problems. China, like India, is one of the great world problems to-day. And even as I write a bitter dispute is going on about the Japanese conquest of Manchuria. At any moment this may flare up and result in disaster.

I told you in my last letter of the scramble for concessions in China in 1898, backed by the warships of the Western powers. They seized all the good ports, and in the province lying behind the port they secured all manner of rights—to open mines, build railroads, etc. And still the demand continued for further concessions. The foreign governments began to talk of “sphere of influence” in China. This is a gentle way which modern imperialistic governments have of partitioning a country. There are various degrees of possession and control. Annexation is of course complete possession; a protectorate is something with slightly less control; “spheres of influence” is lesser still. But they all point to the same thing; one step leads to another. Indeed, as we shall perhaps have the chance of discussing later, annexation is an old and almost discorded method which brings nationalistic trouble in its train. It is far easier

to have economic control of a country and not worry about the rest.

So the partition of China among the western powers seemed to loom ahead. Japan was thoroughly alarmed. The fruits of her victory over China seemed to have gone to these western powers, and she gazed in helpless anger at this splitting up of China. Above all she was wrath with Russia for preventing her from taking possession of Port Arthur and then seizing it herself.

There was one great power, however, which had so far taken no part in this scramble for concessions in China or the plans for partition. This was the United States of America. They had kept away not because they were more virtuous than the others but because they were busy with developing their vast country. As they spread west to the Pacific Ocean fresh areas required development and all their energies and wealth went into this. Indeed, a great deal of European capital was also invested in America for this purpose. But by the end of the century Americans began to look abroad for investments. They looked to China and saw with disapproval that the European powers were on the point of dividing it up into "spheres of influence", with a view perhaps to eventual annexation. America was being left out. So America passed what is called the "Open door" policy in China. This meant that equal facilities should be given to all powers for trade and business in China. The other powers agreed to this.

This continual aggression by the foreign powers thoroughly frightened the Chinese government, and convinced them that they must reform and reorganise. They tried to do so, but they had little chance to get going on account of the continuous demands of the powers for fresh concessions. The Dowager Empress Tzu Hsi had been living in retirement for some years. People began to look to her as a possible saviour. The Emperor at the time suspecting some intrigue wanted to put her in prison. But the old lady retaliated by

removing him from power and taking control herself. She took no steps for radical reform as Japan had done but she concentrated on building up a modern army. She encouraged the formation of local bands of militia for defence. These bodies of local militia called themselves "I Ho Tuan"—Bands of Righteous Harmony. Sometimes they were also called "Fists of Righteous Harmony"—I Ho Chuan. This latter name reached some Europeans in the port towns and they translated it into "Boxers", a crude translation of a graceful phrase.

These "Boxers" became famous and I often used to wonder, till I found out, why they had this extraordinary name. They were a patriotic reaction against foreign aggression and the innumerable insults which had been offered to China and the Chinese by the foreigners. It is not surprising that they did not love the foreigner, who seemed to them the embodiment of evil. In particular, they disliked missionaries, who had misbehaved a lot, and, as for Chinese Christians, they considered them traitors to their country. They represented old China making a last effort to protect itself from the new order. The attempt was not likely to succeed in this way.

There was bound to be friction between these patriotic, anti-foreign, anti-missionary, conservative people and the westerners. Conflicts occurred; an English missionary was murdered; many Europeans and a large number of Chinese Christians were killed. The foreign government demanded the suppression of the patriotic Boxer movement. The Chinese government punished those who were guilty of killing but how could it suppress its own child in this way? Meanwhile the Boxer movement spread rapidly. The foreign ministers alarmed by it summoned troops from their warships and this again made the Chinese think that the foreign invasion had begun. Soon there was conflict. The German minister was killed and there was a siege of the foreign legations in Peking.

A great part of China was up in arms against the foreigners in sympathy with the patriotic Boxer

movement. But some viceroys of provinces remained neutral and helped the foreign powers in this way. The Dowager Empress undoubtedly sympathised with the Boxers but she was not openly associated with them. Foreigners tried to make out that these Boxers were just brigands. But as a matter of fact the rebellion of 1900 was a patriotic effort to free China from foreign interference. A high English officer in China, who was Inspector-General of the customs there at the time, and who went through the siege of the legations, was Sir Robert Hart. He tells us that the foreigners, and especially the missionaries, were to blame for outraging Chinese feelings, that the rebellion, according to him, "was patriotic in its origin and justifiable in much that it aimed at cannot be questioned, and cannot be too much insisted on."

This sudden turning of the worm irritated the western powers greatly. They hurried troops, as they were justified in doing, to save and protect their own people who were besieged in Peking. An international force under a German commander marched to relieve the legations. The Kaiser of Germany asked his troops in China to behave like Huns, and probably it is from this statement that the English took to calling all Germans Huns during the world war.

The Kaiser's advice was followed not only by his own troops but by all the allied armies. As these forces marched to Peking the treatment they gave to the people was such that large numbers preferred suicide to falling into their hands. Chinese women in those days dwarfed their feet and could not easily run away. So many of them killed themselves. In this way the allied army marched on leaving a trail of death and suicide and burning villages. An English war correspondent, who accompanied the allied forces, says:

There are things that I must not write, and may not be printed in England, which would seem to show that this western civilization of ours is merely a veneer over savagery. The actual truth has never been written about any war, and this will be no exception.

The allied armies reached Peking and relieved the legations. And then there was the sack of Peking—"the biggest looting excursion since the days of Pizarro." The art treasures of Peking went into the hands of crude and uncultured people who did not even know their value. And it is sad to note that the missionaries took a prominent part in this looting. Groups of people went from house to house fixing notices on them saying that they belonged to them. The valuables in the house were sold and then a move was made to another big house!

The rivalry of the Powers, and partly also the attitude of the United States government, saved China from partition. But she was made to drink the bitterest cup of humiliation. (All manner of humiliations were heaped on her; a permanent foreign military force was to remain in Peking and also guard the railway; many forts were to be destroyed; a membership of an anti-foreign society was made punishable with death; further commercial privileges were taken and a huge sum of money extorted as an indemnity; and, most terrible blow of all, the Chinese government was forced to put to death as "rebels" the patriotic leaders of the Boxer movement. Such was the "Peking Protocol", as it is called, which was signed in 1901.)

While all this was taking place in China proper, and especially round Peking, the Russian government took advantage of the prevailing confusion to send large numbers of troops across Siberia to Manchuria. China was powerless; all it could do was to protest. But, as it happened, the other powers disapproved very much of the Russian government taking possession in this way of a large slice of territory. Even more anxious and alarmed was the Japanese government at this development. So the powers pressed Russia to go back and the Russian government tried to put on a look of virtuous pain and surprise that its honourable intentions had ever been doubted by any one, and it assured the Powers that it had absolutely no intention of interfering with China's

sovereign rights, and would withdraw its troops as soon as order was restored on the Russian railway in Manchuria. So everybody was satisfied and, no doubt, compliments must have been paid by the Powers to each other for their remarkable unselfishness and virtue! But none the less Russian troops remained in Manchuria and spread right up to Korea.

This advance of Russia in Manchuria and to Korea angered the Japanese greatly. Quietly but intensively they prepared for war. They remembered the combination of three Powers against them in 1895 when they had been forced to give up Port Arthur after the China war, and they tried to prevent this happening again. They found in England a Power which feared Russian advance also and wanted to check it. So in 1902 an Anglo-Japanese Alliance was made with the object of preventing a combination of Powers from coercing either Power in the Far East. Japan felt safe now and took up a more aggressive attitude towards Russia. She demanded that Russian troops be withdrawn from Manchuria. But the foolish Tsar's government of the day looked upon Japan with contempt and never believed that she would fight.

Early in 1904 war began between the two countries. Japan was fully prepared for it and the Japanese people, egged on by their government's propaganda and their cult of emperor worship, were aflame with patriotic fervour. Russia, on the other hand, was wholly unprepared, and her autocratic government could only govern by continuous repression of the people. For a year and a half the war raged and all Asia and Europe and America were witness to Japan's victories on sea and land. Port Arthur fell to the Japanese after amazing deeds of sacrifice by their men and enormous slaughter. A great fleet of warships was sent by Russia from Europe all the way by sea to the Far East. After having crossed half the world, travel-stained after thousands of miles of voyage, this mighty fleet arrived in the sea of Japan and there, in the narrow straits between Japan and Korea,

it was sunk by the Japanese, together with its admiral. Nearly the whole fleet went down in this great disaster.

Russia, Tsarist Russia, was hard hit by defeat after defeat. But Russia had great reserves of power; was it not she that had humbled Napoleon a hundred years before? But just then the real Russia, the common people of Russia, spoke.

In the course of these letters I am continually referring to Russia, England, France, China, Japan, and so on, as if each country is a living entity. This is a bad habit of mine which I have acquired from books and newspapers. What I mean of course is the Russian government, the English government of the day, and so on. These governments may represent nobody but a small group, or they may represent a class, and it is not correct to think or say that they represent the whole people. During the nineteenth century, the English government might be said to represent a small group of well-to-do people, the owners of land and the upper middle classes, who controlled Parliament. The great majority of the people had no say in the matter. In India to-day one hears sometimes of India sending a representative to the League of Nations or a Round Table Conference or to some other function. This is nonsense. The so-called representatives cannot be the representatives of India till the people of India chose them. They are thus the nominees of the Government of India, which in spite of its name, is just a department of the British government. Russia, at the time of the Russo-Japanese War was an autocracy. The Tsar was the "autocrat of all the Russias" and a very foolish autocrat he was. The workers and the peasants were kept down by means of the army, and even the middle classes had no voice of any kind in the government. Many a brave Russian youth raised his head and his hand against this tyranny and sacrificed his life in the fight for freedom. Many a girl went the same way. So, when I talk of "Russia" doing this or doing that, of fighting Japan, all I mean is the Tsar's government and

nothing more.

The Japanese war with its disaster brought more suffering to the common Russian people. The workers often went on strike in the factories to bring pressure on government. On January 22, 1905, several thousands of peaceful peasants and workers, led by a priest, went in procession to the Winter Palace of the Tsar to beg for some relief from their sufferings. The Tsar, instead of hearing what they had to say, had them shot down. There was a terrible slaughter; two hundred were killed and the winter snow of Petersburg was red with blood. It was a Sunday, and, ever since, that day has been called "Bloody Sunday". The country was deeply stirred. There were strikes of workers and these led up to an attempted revolution. This revolution of 1905 was put down with great cruelty by the Tsar's government. It is interesting for us for several reasons. It was a kind of preparation for the great revolution twelve years later, in 1917, which changed the face of Russia. And it was during this unsuccessful revolution of 1905 that the revolutionary workers created a new organisation which was to become so famous later on—the soviets.

From telling you about China and Japan and the Russo-Japanese War I have, as is my way, drifted to the Russian revolution of 1905. But I had to tell you something of this to explain the background in Russia during this Manchurian War. It was largely because of this attempted revolution and the temper of the people that the Tsar came to terms with Japan.

The Russo-Japanese War ended by the treaty of Portsmouth in September, 1905. Portsmouth is in the United States. The American president had invited both parties there, and the treaty of peace was signed there. By this treaty Japan got back at last Port Arthur and the Liaotung peninsula, which, you will remember, she had to give up after the China War. Japan also took a great part of the railway which the Russians had built in Manchuria, and half of the island of Sakhalien,

which lies north of Japan. Further, Russia abandoned all claims on Korea.

So Japan had won, and she entered the charmed circle of the Great Powers. The victory of Japan, an Asiatic country, had great effect on all the countries of Asia. I have told you how, as a boy, I used to get excited over it. That excitement was shared by many a boy and girl and grown-up in Asia. A great European Power had been defeated; therefore Asia could still defeat Europe as it had done so often in the past. "Nationalism spread more rapidly over the eastern countries and the cry of 'Asia for Asiatics' was heard. But this nationalism was not a mere return to the past, a clinging on to old customs and beliefs. Japan's victory was seen to be due to her adoption of the new industrial methods of the West. These so-called Western ideas and methods thus became more popular all over the East.

CHINA BECOMES A REPUBLIC

December 30, 1932

We have seen how Japan's victory over Russia pleased and flattered Asiatic nations. The immediate result of it, however, was to add one more to the small group of aggressive, imperialistic powers. The first effect of this was felt by Korea. Japan's rise meant Korea's fall. Ever since her re-opening to the world, Japan had marked out Korea and partly Manchuria as her own. Of course she declared repeatedly that she was going to respect the integrity of China and the independence of Korea. The imperialist powers have a way of giving fulsome assurances of good will even while they rob the party concerned, of declaring the sanctity of life even as they kill. So Japan declared solemnly that she would not interfere in Korea and at the same time stuck to her old policy of taking possession of her. Her wars with China and Russia both centred round Korea and Manchuria. Step by step she had advanced, and now with the elimination of China and defeat of Russia, her way was clear.

No scruple had ever troubled Japan in the pursuit of her imperial policy. She went about her grabbing openly not caring even to cover it with a veil. As early as 1894, just before the China War, the Japanese had forcibly entered the royal palace at Seoul, the capital of Korea, and removed and imprisoned the queen, who would not do their bidding. After the Russian War, in 1905, the Japanese government forced the Korean king to sign away his country's independence and accept Japanese suzerainty. But this was not good enough. In less than five years this unhappy king was removed

altogether from the throne and Korea was annexed to the Japanese empire. This was in 1910. After a long history of over three thousand years, Korea passed away as a separate State. The king who was thus removed belonged to a dynasty which had driven out the Mongols five hundred years before. But Korea, like her elder sister China, became fossilized and stagnant and had to pay the penalty for this.

Korea was given its old name again—Chosen, the land of the morning calm. The Japanese brought some modern reforms with them but they crushed the spirit of the Korean people ruthlessly. For many years the struggle for independence continued and there were many outbreaks, the most important one being in 1919. The people of Korea, and especially youngmen and women, struggled gallantly against tremendous odds. On one occasion, when a Korean organisation fighting for freedom formally declared independence and thus defied the Japanese, the story goes that they immediately telephoned to the police and informed them of what they had done! Thus deliberately they sacrificed themselves for their ideal. The peaceful and deliberate way they adopted seems almost an echo of Bapu's methods. The suppression of the Koreans by the Japanese is a very sad and dark chapter in history. You will be interested to know that young Korean girls, many of them fresh from college, played a prominent part in the struggle.

Let us go back to China now. We left her rather suddenly after the crushing of the Boxer movement and the Peking Protocol in 1901. China was thoroughly humiliated and again there was talk of reform. Even the old Dowager Empress seemed to think that something of the kind should be done. During the Russo-Japanese War China remained a passive spectator although the fighting was taking place on Chinese territory—Manchuria. Japan's victory strengthened the reformers in China. Education was modernised and many students were sent to Europe and America and Japan

to study modern sciences. The old system of literary examinations by which officials used to be appointed was abolished. This amazing system, typical of China, had lasted for two thousand years, ever since the days of the Han dynasty. It had long outgrown its utility and was keeping back China; so it was well that it was abolished. And yet, in its way, it was for long ages a wonderful thing. It represented the Chinese outlook on life which was neither feudal nor priestly, as in most other countries of Asia and Europe, but was based on reason. The Chinese have always been the least religious of people and yet they have followed their system of an ethical and regulated life more strictly than any religious people. They tried to develop a rational society, but as they limited this within the four corners of the ancient classics, progress and necessary changes were prevented and there was stagnation and fossilization. We in India have much to learn from this Chinese rationalism, for we are still in the grip of caste and dogmatic religion and priest craft and feudal ideas. The great Chinese sage Confucius gave a warning to his people which is worthy of remembrance: "Never have anything to do with those who pretend to have dealings with the supernatural. If you allow supernaturalism to get a foothold in your country, the result would be a dreadful calamity." In our country unfortunately many a man with a tuft of hair on his head, or matted locks, or long beard, or intricate markings on the forehead, or saffron cloak poses as an agent of the supernatural and fleeces the common people.

But China, with all her old time rationalism and culture, had lost grip with the present, and her old institutions gave her little help in her hour of difficulty. The march of events had vitalised many of her children and made them seek diligently for light elsewhere. They had shaken up even the old empress Dowager who talked of granting a constitution and self-government, and sent a commission to foreign countries to study their constitutions.

The Chinese government under the old Dowager was moving at last. But the people were moving faster. As early as 1894 a Chinaman, Dr. Sun Yat Sen, had founded the "China Revival Society" which many joined as a protest against the unfair and one-sided treaties—the "unequal treaties" they are called by the Chinese—which the foreign powers had forced on China. This society grew and attracted to it the youth of the country. In 1911 it changed its name to the Kuo-Min-Tang—the "People's National Party"—and it became the centre and organiser of the Chinese Revolution. Dr. Sun, the inspirer of the movement, looked to the United States for his model. He wanted a republic, not a constitutional monarchy as in England, and certainly no emperor worship as in Japan. The Chinese had never made a fetish of their emperors, and besides, the reigning dynasty was hardly Chinese. It was Manchu, and there was a good deal of anti-Manchu feeling. It was this ferment in the people that had moved the Dowager Empress. But the old lady died soon after her proclamations about the coming constitution. Strangely enough both the old Dowager and her nephew the Emperor, whom she had removed from the throne, died within twenty-four hours of each other in November, 1908. A babe now became the nominal emperor.

Again there were loud demands for the calling of a parliament and anti-Manchu and anti-Monarchical feeling rose higher. The revolutionaries gathered strength. The only strong man who might have faced them was a viceroy of a province, Yuan Shih-Kai. This man was a wily old fox, but he happened to control the only modern and efficient army in China, called the "model army". Very foolishly the Manchu rulers irritated and dismissed Yuan, and thus lost the only man who might have saved them for a while. In October, 1911, revolution broke out in the valley of the Yangtze, and soon a great part of Central and South China was in revolt. On New Year's Day in 1912 these provinces in revolt proclaimed a republic with its capital

at Nanking. Dr. Sun Yat Sen was chosen as President.

Meanwhile Yuan Shih-Kai had been watching the drama, ready to intervene when it would be to his advantage to do so. The story of Yuan's dismissal by the Regent (who was acting for his son, the infant emperor) and his subsequent recall is interesting. Everything was done with all courtesy and politeness in the old China. When Yuan had to be dismissed it was announced that he was suffering from a bad leg! Of course everyone knew that his leg was in excellent condition and that this was just the conventional method for sending him away. But Yuan had his revenge. Two years later, in 1911, when mutiny and revolt had broken out against the government, the Regent summoned Yuan in alarm. Yuan had no intention of going unless his terms were granted and he was made boss of the show. So he replied to the Regent that he regretted that he could not possibly leave home just then as his leg was not yet well enough for him to travel! His leg recovered with remarkable speed when his conditions were accepted a month later.

But it was too late to check the revolution, and Yuan was too clever to compromise himself by committing himself to either side. Finally he advised the abdication of the Manchus. With a republic facing them and deserted by their own general, the Manchu rulers had little choice left. On February 12, 1912, an Edict of abdication was issued, and thus disappeared the Manchu dynasty from the Chinese stage after over two and a half centuries of memorable rule. According to a Chinese phrase: "They had come in with the roar of a tiger, to disappear like the tail of a snake."

On this same day, February 12, there took place a strange ceremony in Nanking, the new Republican capital, and also the place where stood the mausoleum of the first Ming sovereign—a ceremony which brought together the old and the new in vivid contrast. Sun Yat Sen, president of the Republic, went with his cabinet to this mausoleum and presented offerings in the old

FARTHER INDIA AND THE EAST INDIES

December 31, 1932

We have done with the Far East for a while. We have seen something of India also during the nineteenth century, and it is time that we moved westward to Europe and America and Africa. But before we take this long journey I should like you to have a glimpse of the South East corner of Asia and bring our knowledge of it up-to-date. It is long since we considered these countries. I have referred to them in some previous letters rather vaguely and variously, and perhaps not very correctly, as Malaysia and Indonesia and the East Indies and Farther India. I doubt if any of these names covers the whole area but so long as we understand each other, what's in a name?

Look at a map if you have one handy. To the South-East of Asia you will see a peninsula consisting of Burma and Siam and, what is called now, French Indo-China. And from between Burma and Siam a thin tongue of land shoots out—the Malay Peninsula—fattening out towards the end, with the city of Singapore at the tip. From Malay to Australia there lie many islands, big ones and small, curiously shaped, giving the impression of the ruins of a giant bridge connecting Asia and Australia. These islands are the East Indies, and to the north of these lie the Philippines. A modern map will tell you that Burma and Malay are under the British; Indo-China is French, and, in between, Siam is an independent country. The East Indies—Sumatra and Java and a great part of Borneo and Celebes and the Moluccas, the famous spice islands which drew the mariners of Europe across many thousand miles of

the trade as their peculiar preserve and would not allow any one to share. They had got on well enough with the Spaniards in the Philippines, as the Spaniards were more interested in religion than in trade. There was little of religion about the British and Dutch adventurers who came on behalf of the two new trading companies. Very soon there was conflict.

The Portuguese had been ruling for over a century and a quarter in the East. They were far from popular with the people they ruled and there was discontent. The two trading companies of England and Holland took advantage of this discontent and helped these people to get rid of the Portuguese, but, immediately after, they themselves stepped into the place vacated by the Portuguese. As rulers of India and the East Indies they took tribute from the people in the shape of heavy taxes and otherwise and this helped them greatly in carrying on the foreign trade without any great burden on Europe. The great difficulty which Europe had previously experienced in paying for the goods from Eastern countries was thus lessened. Even so, as we have seen, England tried to stop the inflow of Indian goods by prohibition and heavy duties. Matters stood thus till the coming of the Industrial Revolution.

The conflict of the Dutch and the British in the East Indies did not last long, because the British withdrew from it. They were beginning to get busy in India and had their hands full. So these East Indian islands were left entirely to the Dutch East India Company, with the exception of the Philippines which remained under the Spanish. As the Spanish cared very little for trade and were not trying to conquer any further territory, the Dutch had no rivals now in this area.

The Dutch East India Company, like its namesake the British Company in India, sat down to make as much money as possible and to get rich quickly. For a hundred and fifty years this trading company ruled these islands. They did not pay the slightest attention

to the welfare of the people. They sat heavily on them and oppressed them and extorted as much tribute out of them as was possible. When it was easy to make money by taking tribute, trade became a secondary consideration and languished. The company was thoroughly inefficient, and the Dutchmen who went out to serve it belonged to the same type of unscrupulous adventurers as the factors or agents of the British Company in India. Money-making, by fair means or foul, was their chief concern. In India the resources of the country were far greater and even a great deal of mismanagement could be covered up; in India also a number of able British governors made the administration efficient at the top, even though it crushed the people at the bottom. But, you will remember, that the great Revolt of 1857 put an end to the British East India Company.

The Dutch East India Company went from bad to worse and ultimately in 1798 the Netherland's government took direct charge of the Eastern Islands. Soon after, owing to the Napoleonic Wars in Europe and Holland becoming a part of Napoleon's Empire, the English government took possession of these islands. For five years they were treated as a province of British India and during this period considerable reforms were introduced. With the fall of Napoleon the East Indies went back to Holland. During the five years that Java was connected with the British Indian Government, an Englishman Thomas Stamford Raffles acted as lieutenant-governor of Java. Raffles reported that the history of the Dutch colonial administration "is one of the most extraordinary relations of treachery, bribery, massacre, and meanness". Among other practices the Dutch officials used to have a regular system of kidnapping people in the Celebes in order to secure slaves for use in Java. This kidnapping was accompanied by devastation and killing.

The direct rule of the Netherland's government was no better than that of the company. In some ways

it was even more oppressive for the people. You will remember perhaps what I told you of the Indigo Plantation system in Bengal, which caused so much misery to the cultivators. Something like this system, only much worse, was introduced in Java and elsewhere. In the days of the company the people were made to supply goods. Now, under the "culture system" as it was called, they were forced to work for a certain period every year, which was supposed to be about a third or a quarter of the cultivator's time. In practice, often enough, almost all the cultivator's time was taken up. The Dutch government worked through contractors, who were given advances of money, free of any interest, by the government. These contractors then exploited the land with the half of the forced labour. The produce of the land was supposed to be shared, in certain fixed proportions, between the government, the contractor and the cultivator. Probably the poor cultivator's share was the smallest of all; I do not know exactly what it was. The government also laid it down that certain articles that were required in Europe must be grown over part of the land. Among these articles were tea, coffee, sugar, indigo, etc. As in the case of the indigo plantations in Bengal, these articles had to be grown even though the profit was less than it otherwise might be.

The Dutch government made enormous profits; the contractors flourished; the cultivators starved and lived in misery. But the appetite for profits grows and the government went on exploiting their "culture system" with more and more intensity. In the middle of the nineteenth century there was a terrible famine and vast numbers of people died. Only then was it thought necessary to do something for the unhappy cultivators. Slowly his conditions were bettered, but even as late as 1916 there was still forced labour.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century a number of educational and other reforms were introduced by the Dutch. A new middle class has grown up

and a nationalist movement has demanded freedom. As in India some very halting advance has been made and feeble assemblies, with little real power, established. About five years ago there was a revolution in the Dutch East Indies; it was crushed with great cruelty. But no amount of cruelty or oppression can kill the spirit of freedom which has arisen in Java and the other islands.

The Dutch East Indies are now known as Netherlands India. Every fortnight an air service goes all the way from Holland, across Europe and Asia, to the city of Babaria in Java. The giant Dutch aeroplanes pass Allahabad on their long journey.

I have finished my outline story of the East Indian islands, and now I want you to cross over to the mainland of Asia. Of Burma there is little more to be said. Often the country was divided between North and South, and the two struggled with each other. Sometimes a powerful king united the two and even ventured to conquer neighbouring Siam. And then, in the nineteenth century came the conflicts with the British. The Burmese king, over-confident of his strength, invaded and annexed Assam. The first Burmese War with the British in India followed in 1824 and Assam went to the British. The British had now found out that the Burmese government and army were weak and the desire to annex the whole country came to them. Silly pretexts were found for a second and a third war and by 1885 the whole kingdom was annexed and made part of the British Indian Empire. Since then Burma's fate has been linked with India's. We stand or fall together.

Recently the British government has tried to separate Burma from India. But the Burmese people have just decided that they do not want to be separated. What the future will bring I do not know. Burma and India may remain part of the same political group or may not; primarily that is for the Burmese people to decide. Whatever they decide and whatever happens, Burma and India can only be friends with each other. We have got to know each other a little, although both

of us met under the misfortune of foreign rule, and we shall hold to one another in good fortune or ill, whatever may befall us.

South of Burma, the British had also spread in the Malay Peninsula. They got the island of Singapore early in the 19th century, and owing to its happy situation it soon became a rising commercial city and a port of call for all the ships going to the Far East. The old port of Malacca, further up in the peninsula, was soon left behind. From Singapore the British began to spread north. There were many small states in the Malay Peninsula, most of them vassal to Siam. By the end of the century all these states were British protectorates and they were joined together in a kind of federation named the "Federated Malay States". Siam had to give up all the rights it possessed in some of these states to England.

Siam was thus being surrounded by European powers. To the west and south, in Burma and Malay, England was supreme; to the East France was aggressive and was absorbing Annam. Annam acknowledged China's suzerainty but that was of little help when China herself was in difficulties. You will remember my telling you in a recent letter on China about fighting between France and China over the French invasion of Annam. France was checked a little but only for a while. In the second half of the 19th century France built up a great colony, called French Indo-China, including Annam and Cambodia. Cambodia, where in the old days the empire of Angkor the magnificent had flourished, was a subject state of Siam. France established its sway over it by threat of war with Siam. It is worth noticing that all the early intrigues of the French in these countries were carried on through French missionaries. One of these missionaries was sentenced to death for some reason or other, and it was to secure reparation for this that the first French expedition was sent in 1857. This expedition seized the port of Saigon in the south and from there French control

spread north.

I am afraid there is a great deal of repetition in these sordid tales of imperialist advance in the countries of Asia. The methods were more or less the same everywhere, and almost everywhere they succeeded. I have dealt with country after country and finished the story, for the time being at least, by putting it under some European power. Only one country in South-East Asia escaped this fate, and this was Siam.

Siam was lucky to escape, wedged in as she was between England in Burma and France in Indo-China. Perhaps it was because of the presence of these European rivals to the right and left of her that she escaped. She owed her good fortune also to the fact that she was having a spell of fairly good government and there were no internal troubles, as there had been in many other countries. But good government was of course no guarantee against foreign invasion. As it happened England had her hands full in India and Burma, and France in Indo-China. By the time both of them had reached the frontiers of Siam, late in the 19th century, the day for annexations was already passing. The spirit of resistance was rising in the East and nationalist movements were beginning in the colonies and dependencies. There was danger of war between Siam and France over Cambodia, but Siam gave in and avoided friction with the French. To the west a strong mountain barrier protected Siam from the British in Burma.

I have told you that twice at least in the past the Burmese kings have invaded Siam and even annexed it. The last invasion was in 1767 when the Siamese capital named Ayuthia or Ayudhia (note how Indian names occur) was destroyed. Soon however the Burmese were driven out by a popular rising and a new dynasty began with king Rama I in 1782. Even to-day, just a hundred and fifty years later, this dynasty still reigns in Siam and all the kings seem to be called "Rama". Under this new dynasty Siam had good but

rather paternal government and, very wisely, an effort was made to cultivate good relations with foreign powers. The ports were opened for foreign trade, commercial treaties were made with some foreign powers, and some reforms were introduced in the administration. The new capital was at Bangkok, where it still is. All this was not enough to keep the imperialist wolves away. England spread in Malay and took Siamese territory there; France got Cambodia and other Siamese territory to the East. France and England nearly came to blows over Siam in 1896. But then, in the recognised imperialist fashion, they agreed to guarantee the integrity of the remaining portions of Siamese territory and, at the same time, divided this up with three "spheres of influence"! The eastern part was the French sphere, the western was the British and in between there was a neutral area where both could have their pickings. Having thus solemnly guaranteed the integrity of Siam, a few years later, France took some more territory to the East, and England of course then had to take some compensation in the south!

Still, in spite of all this, a part of Siam has escaped European domination, and that is the only country to do so in this part of Asia. The tide of European aggression has been checked now and there is little chance of Europe getting more territory in Asia. The time is soon coming when European powers in Asia will have to pack up and go home.

Siam was till recently an autocratic monarchy and, in spite of some reforms, there was a good deal of feudalism. A few months ago there was a revolution there, a peaceful one, and the upper middle classes, it seems, came to the front. Some kind of parliament has been established there. The king, of the dynasty of Rama I wisely agreed to the change and so he has remained. Siam is thus now a constitutional monarchy.

One other country of South East Asia remains for us to consider—the Philippine Islands. I wanted to write about them also in this letter, but it is late and I am

tired, and the letter is long enough. This is the last letter I shall write to you this year—1932—for the old year has run its course and is at its last gasp. In another three hours it will be no more and will become a memory of the past.

ANOTHER NEW YEAR'S DAY

New Year's Day, 1933

It is New Year's Day to-day. The earth has completed another cycle round the sun. It recognises no special days or holidays, as it rushes ceaselessly through space, caring not at all what happens on its surface to the innumerable midgets that crawl on it, and quarrel with each other, and imagine themselves—men and women—in their foolish vanity, the salt of the earth and the hub of the universe. The earth ignores her children, but we can hardly ignore ourselves, and on New Year's Day many of us are apt to rest awhile in our life's journey and look back and grow reminiscent, and then look forward and try to gather hope. So I am reminiscent to-day. It is my third consecutive New Year's Day in prison, though in between I was out in the wider world for many months. Going further back, I remember that during the last eleven years I have spent five New Year's Days in prison. And I begin to wonder how many more such days and other days I shall see in prison!

But I am a "habitual" now, in the language of the prison, and that many times over, and I am used to gaol life. It is a strange contrast to my life outside, of work and activity and large gatherings and public speaking and a rushing about from place to place. Here all is different; everything is quiet, and there is little movement and I sit for long intervals on a chair, and for long hours I am silent. The days and the weeks and the months pass by, one after the other, merging into each other, and there is little to distinguish one from the other. And the past looks like a blurred picture with

nothing standing out. Yesterday takes one back to the day of one's arrest for in between is almost a blank with little to impress the mind. It is the life of a vegetable rooted to one place, growing there without comment or argument, silent, motionless. And sometimes the activities of the outside world appear strange and a little bewildering to one in prison; they seem distant and unreal—a phantom show. So we develop two natures, the active and the passive, two ways of living, two personalities, like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Have you read this story of Robert Louis Stevenson's?

One gets used to everything in time, even to the routine and sameness of gaol. And rest is good for the body; and quiet is good for the mind, it makes one think. "*Le repos est une bonne chose, mais l'ennui est son frere!*" And now perhaps you will understand what these letters to you have meant to me. They may be dull reading to you and tedious and prolix. But they have filled up my gaol life and given me an occupation which has brought me a great deal of joy. It was just two years ago to-day, on New Year's Day, that I began them in Naini Prison and I continued them on my return to gaol. Sometimes I have not written for weeks, sometimes I have written daily. When the mood to write captured me and I sat down with pen and paper, I moved in a different world and you were my darling companion, and gaol with all its works was forgotten. These letters thus came to represent for me my escapes from gaol!

This letter that I am now writing is numbered a hundred, and this numbering only began nine months ago in Bareilly jail. I am amazed that I have written so much already, and I fear what you will say or feel when this mountain of letters descends upon you in one great mass. But you cannot grudge me my escapes and journeys from prison! It is more than seven months since I saw you, my dear. What a long time it has been!

The story that my letters have contained has not been a very pleasant one. History is not pleasant. Man

in spite of his great and vaunted progress is still a very unpleasant and selfish animal. And yet perhaps it is possible to see the silver lining of progress right through the long and dismal record of selfishness and quarrelsomeness and inhumanity of man. I am a bit of an optimist and am inclined to take a hopeful view of things, but optimism must not blind us to the dark spots around us and to the danger of an unthinking optimism itself being very much misplaced. For the world as it has been and is still gives little enough ground for optimism. It is a hard place for the idealist and for him who does not take his beliefs on trust. All manner of questions arise for which there is no straight answer; all manner of doubts come which do not easily vanish. Why should there be so much folly and misery in the world? That is the old question that troubled Prince Siddhartha two thousand five hundred years ago in this country of ours. The story is told that he asked himself this question many a time before enlightenment came to him, and he became the Buddha. He asked himself, it is said:

"How can it be that Brahm
Would make a world and keep it miserable,
Since if all powerful, he leaves it so,
He is not good, and if not powerful,
He is not God?"

In our own country the fight for freedom goes on, and yet many of our countrymen pay little heed to it and argue and quarrel among themselves, and think in terms of a sect or a religious group or narrow class, and forget the larger good. And some, blind to the vision of freedom,

".....took truce with tyrants and grew tame,
And gathered up cast crowns and creeds to wear,
And rags and shards regilded."

In the name of law and order tyranny flourishes and tries to crush those who will not submit to it. Strange that the very thing that should be a refuge of the weak and the oppressed should become a weapon

in the hand of the oppressors. This letter has had several quotations already but I must give you one other which appeals to me and which seems to fit in with our present state. It is from a book of Montesquien, a French philosopher of the eighteenth century, whom I have mentioned already in one of my earlier letters.

**"Il n'y a point de plus cruelle tyrannie que celle que l'on exerce à l'ombre des lois et avec les couleurs de la justice, lorsqu'on va pour ainsi dire noyer des malheureux sur la planche même sur laquelle ils s'étaient sauvés."*

This letter has become much too dismal and for a New Year Day letter that is highly unbecoming. Indeed I am not dismal, and why should we be dismal? We have the joy of working and struggling for a great cause; we have a great leader, a beloved friend and a trusty guide, whose sight gives strength and whose touch inspires; and we have the surety that success awaits us, and sooner or later we shall achieve it. Life would be dull and colourless but for the obstacles that we have to overcome and the fights that we have to win. I feel light-hearted to-day because news has come that Bapu has postponed his threatened fast. A great load has been lifted from our minds.

And you, my darling one, on the threshold of life, must have no dealings with the dismal and the dreary. You will face life and all that it brings with a joyful and serene countenance, and welcome such difficulties as may come your way for the pleasure of surmounting them.

And so, *au revoir, bienaimée*, and may this be not too long in coming!

**"There is no more cruel tyranny than that which is committed under the shadow of law and under colour of justice inasmuch as the unfortunates are, so to say, drowned under the very plank on which they had been rescued."*

THE PHILIPPINES AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

January 3, 1933

Having had a little aside on New Year's Day, we must now get on with our story. We might as well deal with the Philippines Islands so that the eastern part of Asia might be done with. Why should we pay special attention to these islands? There are many other islands in Asia and elsewhere which I am not even mentioning in the course of these letters. We are trying to follow the growth of the new imperialism in Asia and its reactions on the older civilizations. India is the model empire for this study; China shows us another and a different, but also a vastly important, aspect of the spread of this industrial imperialism. The East Indies, Indo-China, etc., have also something to teach us. In the same way the Philippines have interest for us. This interest is increased because we find a new Power in action here—the United States of America.

We saw that in China the United States were not as aggressive as the other Powers; on some occasions they even helped China by restraining the other imperialist governments. This was not due to their dislike of imperialism or to a love of China, but to certain internal factors which made them differ from the European countries. These European countries were tightly packed in a small continent, thickly populated, with little elbow room for each other. There was always friction and trouble. With the coming of industrialism their population grew rapidly, and they began to produce more and more goods which they could not dispose of at home. Food was required for the growing

population and raw materials for the factories and markets for the manufactured goods. The urgent economic necessity for fulfilling these wants drove them to distant countries and to wars for empire among themselves.

These considerations did not apply to the United States. Their country was about as big as Europe and the population was small. There was plenty of room for everybody, plenty of opportunities for devoting their energies to the development of their own vast undeveloped territories. As railways were built they went west and spread further and further till they reached the Pacific Ocean. All this work in their own country kept the Americans busy and they had no time or inclination for colonial adventures. Indeed, at one time, as I have told you, a demand for labour on the Californian coast made them ask the Chinese government for Chinese workers, a request which was complied with and which later created a lot of bitterness between the two countries. This pre-occupation of the Americans with their own country kept them away from the race for empire in which the European governments were indulging. They interfered in China only when they felt that they must, and when they feared that the other Powers would divide the country among themselves.

The Philippines, however, came under direct American rule. They tell us of American imperialism, and so have interest for us. Do not imagine that the Empire of the United States is confined to the Philippine Islands. Outwardly that is the only empire they have got, but, profiting by the experience and troubles of other imperialist powers, they have improved on the old methods. They do not take the trouble to annex a country, as Britain annexed India; all they are interested in is profit and so they take steps to control the wealth of the country. Through the control of the wealth it is easy enough to control the people of the country and, indeed, the land itself. And so without much trouble,

or friction with an aggressive nationalism, they control the country and share its wealth. This ingenious method is called economic imperialism. The map does not show it. A country may appear to be free and independent if you consult a geography or an atlas. But if you see behind the veil you will find that it is in the grip of another country, or rather its bankers and big businessmen. It is this invisible empire that the United States of America possess. And it is this invisible but none the less effective empire which Britain is trying to preserve for herself, in India and elsewhere, when outwardly she hands control of the political machine to the people of the country. This is a dangerous thing and we must beware of it.

We need not look into this invisible economic empire at this stage, for the Philippines are part of the visible empire.

There is also another, though a minor and rather sentimental, reason for our interest in the Philippines. To-day they have a Spanish-American appearance, but the whole background of their old culture was from India. Indian culture travelled to them *via* Sumatra and Java and touched almost every aspect of life—social, religious and political. Old Indian myths and stories and part of our literature reached them. Their languages contain many Sanskrit words. Their art is influenced by India, and so are their laws and handicrafts. Even dress and ornamentation bears this impress. The Spaniards, during their long rule of over three hundred years, tried to destroy all evidence of this old Indian culture, and so, little remains now.

Spanish occupation of these islands began so long ago as 1565. They are thus among the earliest footholds of Europe in Asia. They were governed quite differently from the Portuguese or British or Dutch colonies. Trade was not encouraged. Religion was the background of the governments and the officials were mostly missionaries and churchmen. It has been called a "Missionaries' Empire". No attempt was made to

improve the condition of the people. There was misgovernment and oppression and heavy taxation, and attempts at forced conversions to Christianity. These conditions naturally led to many revolts. Many Chinese came over to the islands to carry on trade. As they refused to become Christians, there were massacres of them. English and Dutch merchants were not allowed, partly, because they were often enemies and partly because they were Protestant Christians and thus heretics in the eyes of the Roman Catholic Spaniards.

Conditions worsened. But one good result followed. The different parts and groups of the islands were united, and a national consciousness began to arise in the nineteenth century. The opening out of the islands to foreign merchants about the middle of this century led to some reforms in education and other departments, and trade and business grew. A Filipino middle class developed. There had been inter-marriages between the Spaniards and the Filipinos, and many Filipinos had Spanish blood. Spain came to be looked up to almost as a home country and Spanish ideas spread. None the less the spirit of nationalism grew and, as it was repressed, it became revolutionary. There was no idea at first of separation from Spain, Self-government was demanded and some representation in Spain's feeble and irreflective parliament called the "Cortes". It is curious how national movements everywhere begin moderately and inevitably become more extreme and stand ultimately for separation and independence. A demand for freedom suppressed has to be met later with compound interest. So in the Philippines the demand grew; national organizations were formed to enforce it and secret societies also spread. A "Young Filipino Party" whose leader was Dr. Jose Rizal played a prominent part. The Spanish authorities tried to crush the movement by the only method which governments seem to know—terrorism. Rizal and large numbers of other leaders were sentenced to death and executed in 1896.

This was the last straw. Open rebellion then broke out against the Spanish government, and the Filipinos issued their "declaration of independence". For a full year the struggle continued and the Spaniards could not crush the rebellion. Then promise of substantial reforms led to a suspension. Nothing, however, was done by Spain and in 1898 the rebellion broke out afresh.

Meanwhile the American government had quarrelled with Spain over some other matter and war was declared between the two countries. An American fleet attacked the Philippines in April, 1898. The rebel Filipino leaders fully expecting that the great American Republic would stand for Filipino freedom, helped the Americans in the war. They again declared their independence and organised a republican government. A Filipino Congress assembled in September, 1898, and by the end of November a constitution was adopted. But while constitution making was being discussed by this Congress, Spain was being beaten by the United States. Spain was weak and before the end of the year confessed herself beaten and signed peace. In the terms of peace Spain handed over the Philippine islands to the United States. This generous gift cost it nothing at all as the Filipino rebels had already put an end to Spanish authority there.

The United States government now took steps to take possession of the islands. The Filipinos protested and pointed out that Spain had no business and no power to transfer the islands as they possessed nothing to transfer at the time. Their protest was in vain, and just when they were congratulating themselves on their newly won freedom, they had to fight afresh and fight a vastly more powerful government, than that of Spain. For three and a half years they carried on their gallant struggle; for a few months as an organised government, and later as guerilla warfare.

The revolt was finally suppressed and American rule established. Considerable reforms were introduced, especially in education, but the demand for independence

continued. In 1916 the United States Congress passed a bill known as the "Jones Bill" by which they transferred some powers to an elected legislature. But the American Governor-General has the right to interfere and he has often done so.

There have been no risings against the United States authorities in the island; but the Filipinos have refused to be content with their present lot and have carried on their agitation and demand for independence. The Americans have often assured them, in the true imperialist manner, that they were there only for the Filipino's benefit and would leave the islands as soon as the Filipinos were capable of carrying on by themselves. Even in the Jones Bill of 1916 it was stated that "it is, as it always has been, the purpose of the people of the United States to withdraw their sovereignty over the Philippine Islands and to recognise their independence as soon as a stable government can be established therein." In spite of this there are many people in America who are openly opposed to Philippine independence.

Even as I write news comes in the papers that the United States Congress has passed a resolution, or some such declaration, stating that the Philippines will be granted their independence within ten years, subject to certain safeguards. What these safeguards are I do not know; but I suspect the word. In an inoffensive exterior it covers all manner of evil designs! It is bandied about often in regard to India, and we know what it means.

The United States have certain economic interests in the Philippines and they are anxious to protect them. They are particularly interested in rubber plantations there, as rubber is one of the very necessary things that they lack. But their main interest in the occupation of the island is, I believe, fear of Japan. Japan is quite near the Philippines, and Japan is overflowing with an ever-growing population. It is quite likely that the Japanese government looks greedily on these islands. There is not much love lost between the American and the Japanese

governments, and so the question of the future of the Philippines becomes a part of the larger question of the Pacific Powers and their relations. But we have no business to go into that here.

WHERE THREE CONTINENTS MEET

January 16, 1933

One of my new year wishes has found fulfilment much sooner than I had expected when I wrote a fortnight ago. After my long wait we have had an interview at last, and I have seen you again. And the joy and excitement of seeing you and others have filled me for many a day, and upset my routine and made me neglect my usual work. I have felt in holiday mood. Four days ago it was that we met and already it seems so long ago! Already I think of the future and wonder when and where our next meeting will be.

Meanwhile no jail rules can stop me from my game of make-believe, and I shall continue these letters to you.

I have been writing to you for some time past about the nineteenth century. I tried to give you at first a general survey of this century, which is roughly the hundred years after Napoleon's fall. Then we proceeded to a more detailed survey of some countries. We had a good look at India, and then at China and Japan, and lastly at Farther India and the East Indies. So that we have so far only considered a part of Asia in this more detailed survey; the rest of the world remains. It is a long story, and it is not easy to keep it straight and clear. I have to take countries and continents one after the other and deal with them separately. Again and again I have to go back and cover the same period of time for a different area. This must necessarily be a little confusing. But you must try to remember that all these nineteenth century events in different countries took place contemporaneously, more or less at the same time, influencing and reacting on each other. That is.

why the study of the history of one country by itself is very deceptive; only a world history can give us a right idea of the importance of events and forces that have shaped the past and made it into the present. These letters do not pretend to give you such a world history; that is a task beyond me and you will find no lack of books on the subject. All that I have tried to do in these letters is to rouse your interest in world history, to show you certain aspects of it, and to make you follow certain threads of human activity from the early times to to-day. I do not know how far I shall succeed; I fear that the result of my labours might be to place before you a hotch-potch which confuses you more than helps you to form a right judgment.

Europe was the driving force of the nineteenth century. Nationalism reigned there, and industrialism spread and radiated to distant corners of the world and often took the shape of imperialism. We have seen this in our first brief survey of the century, and have followed the effects of imperialism in some detail in India and East Asia. Before we go to Europe again for a closer look I should like you to pay a brief visit to Western Asia. I have neglected this part for a long time, chiefly because I am rather ignorant of its subsequent history.

Western Asia is very different from Eastern Asia and from India. In the distant past of course many races and tribes came from Central Asia and the East and over-ran it. The Turks themselves came in this way. Before the Christian era Buddhism also spread right up to Asia Minor but it does not appear to have taken root there. Western Asia has, during the ages, looked more towards Europe than towards Asia or the East. In a way it has been Asia's window to Europe. Even the spread of Islam in various parts of Asia did not make much difference to the western outlook.

India and China and the neighbouring countries never looked at Europe in this way. They were wrapped up in Asia. Between India and China there is a vast

difference, in race and outlook and culture. China has never been the slave of religion and has not had any priestly hierarchy. India has always prided herself on her religion, and her society has been priest-ridden in spite of Buddha's attempts to rid her of this incubus. There are many other differences between India and China, and yet there is a strange unity between India and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia. This unity has been given by the thread of the Buddha legend which has bound these people together and brought many a common motive in art and literature and music and song.

Islam brought something of Western Asia into India. It was a different culture, a different outlook on life. But the Western Asian outlook did not come to India direct or in its natural garb, as it might have done if the Arabs had conquered India; it came, long afterwards, through the Central Asian races who were not its fittest representatives. None the less Islam connected India with Western Asia, and India thus became the meeting place of these two great cultures. Islam also went to China, and large numbers adopted it, but it never challenged the old culture of China. In India this challenge was made because Islam was for long the religion of the ruling class. India thus became the country where the two cultures faced each other, and I have already written to you of the many efforts to find a synthesis in order to solve this difficult problem. These efforts succeeded largely, when a new danger and a new obstruction came in the shape of the British conquest. To-day both these old cultures have lost their old meaning. Nationalism and the old industrialism of the big machine have changed the world, and the old cultures can only survive to the extent they can fit themselves in the new economic conditions. Their hollow shells remain; their real meaning has gone. In Western Asia, in the very homelands of Islam, vast changes are going on. China and the Far East are in a state of continuous upset. In India we can ourselves

see what is happening.

I have not written about Western Asia for so long that I find it a little difficult to pick up the threads. You will remember my telling you of the great Arab empire of Baghdad, and how it fell before the Turks—the Seljuq Turks they were, not the Ottomans,—and how it was finally destroyed by Chengiz Khan's Mongols. These Mongols also put an end to the empire of Khwarazm which spread to Central Asia and included Persia. Timur the Lame came later and, after a brief day of military success and massacre, was no more. To the west, however, a new empire arose which, in spite of defeat by Timur, went on spreading. This was the empire of the Ottoman Turks who took possession of Asia west of Persia, and of Egypt, and of a good part of South-Eastern Europe. For many generations they threatened Europe and to the religions and superstitious people of Europe, just emerging from the middle ages, they seemed to be a scourge of God sent to punish sinners.

Under Ottoman rule Western Asia almost disappears from history; it becomes a back-water cut off from the main current of the world's life. For many centuries, indeed thousands of years it had been the highway between Europe and Asia and innumerable caravans had crossed its cities and deserts carrying merchandise from one continent to another. But the Turks did not encourage trade and, even if they had done so, they were powerless before a new factor. This was the development of the sea routes between Asia and Europe. The sea became the new highway and the ship took the place of the camel of the desert. With this change Western Asia lost a great deal of its significance to the world. It lived a life apart. The opening of the Suez Canal, in the second half of the nineteenth century, made the sea route even more important. This canal became the greatest highway between East and West, bringing two worlds nearer to each other.

And now, in the twentieth century, another change

is taking place before our very eyes; and in the old rivalry between land and sea, land is winning and displacing the sea as the world's chief highway. The coming of the automobile made a difference and the aeroplane added to this vastly. The ancient trade routes, deserted for so long, are again getting busy with traffic, but, instead of the leisurely camel, the automobile rushes across the desert and over head flies the aeroplane.

The Ottoman Empire had joined together three continents—Asia, Africa and Europe. But long before the nineteenth century it had grown weak and this century saw it going to pieces. From the "Scourge of God" it became the "Sick Man of Europe." The World War of 1914—18 put an end to it, and out of its ashes arose a new Turkey, self-reliant, strong and progressive, and several new states.

Western Asia, I have said above, is Asia's window to Europe. It is bounded by the Mediterranean Sea, which has divided and linked together Asia and Europe and Africa. This link has been a powerful one in the past, and the countries bordering on the Mediterranean have had much in common. European civilization begins in the Mediterranean area. Old Greece or Hellas had her colonies dotted about the sea board of the three continents; the Roman Empire spread round it; Christianity found its early home round the Mediterranean; the Arabs took their culture from the eastern coast to Sicily, and right across the Southern African coasts to Spain in the West, and remained there for seven hundred years.

We see thus how intimate is the connection of the Asiatic Mediterranean countries with South Europe and North Africa. Western Asia thus becomes a definite link in the past between Asia and the other two continents. But it is easy enough to find such links all over the world if we but look for them. The narrow outlook of nationalism has made us think of separate countries far more than of the oneness of the world and the common interests of different countries.

A LOOK BACK

January 19, 1933

I have read recently two books which have pleased me greatly, and which I should have liked to share with you. They are both by a Frenchman, Rene Grousset, who is the conservator or director of the Musee Guimet in Paris. Have you been to this delightful museum of eastern, and especially Buddhist, art? I do not remember your accompanying me. M. Grousset has written a survey of eastern, that is Asiatic, civilizations in four volumes, dealing separately with India, the Middle East (which means Western Asia and Persia), China, and Japan. Being interested in Art, he has dealt with his subject from the point of view of the development of various kinds of artistic activity, and he has given large numbers of beautiful pictures. It is far better and more interesting to learn history in this way than by learning about wars and battles and the intrigues of kings.

I have only read two of M. Grousset's volumes so far, those dealing with India and the Middle East, and they have delighted me. The pictures of fine buildings and noble statuary and wonderful frescoes and paintings have carried me far from Dehra Dun Jail to distant countries and times long past.

I wrote to you long ago of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa in the Indus Valley in North West India, the ruins of the ancient civilization which flourished five thousand years ago. In those far off days when people lived and worked and played in Mohenjo Daro there were many other centres of civilization. Our information is very little; it is limited to certain ruins that have been discovered in various parts of Asia and in Egypt. Perhaps

if we dig hard enough and widely enough we may find many more such ruins. But already we know of a high civilization in those days in the Nile Valley in Egypt; in Chaldea (Mesopotamia) where Susa was the capital of the State of Elam; in Persepolis in Eastern Persia; in Turkestan in Central Asia; and by the Yellow River or Hoang-Ho in China.

‘This was the period when copper was beginning to be used, the age of polished stone was passing. All over these wide areas from Egypt to China about the same stage of growth seems to have been reached.’ Indeed it is surprising to find some proof of a common civilization spreading right across Asia, which show that the different centres were not isolated but were in touch with each other. Agriculture flourished and domestic animals were kept and there was some trade. The art of writing had appeared but these old picture writings have not been deciphered yet. Similar tools are found in widely separated areas and the artistic products are also remarkably similar. Painted pottery, beautiful vases with all manner of designs and decorations, attract special notice. This pottery is so much in evidence that this whole period has been named the “painted pottery civilization”. There was also gold and silver jewellery, alabaster and marble vessels, and even cotton fabrics. Each of these centres of early civilization from Egypt to the Indus Valley and to China had something special to itself and carried on independently, and yet the thread of common and a connected civilization seems to run through them.

‘This was, roughly, five thousand years ago.’ But it is clear that such a civilization was relatively advanced, and must have taken some thousands of years to develop. In the Nile Valley and in Chaldea it can be traced back for at least another two thousand years, and probably the other centres are equally old.

Out of this common and widespread civilization of the early copper-age, the Mohenjo Daro period of about 3000 B.C., the four great Eastern civilizations diverge

and differentiate and develop separately. These four were the Egyptian, the Mesopotamian, the Indian, and the Chinese. It was during this later period that the Great Pyramids were built in Egypt and the great Sphinx at Gizeh. Later still came the Theban period in Egypt when the Theban Empire flourished there, about 2000 B.C., and later and wonderful statues and frescoes were produced. This was a great period of a renaissance of art. The huge temple of Luxor was built about this time. Tutankhamen, whose name everybody seems to know without knowing anything else about him, was one of the Theban Pharaohs.

In Chaldea powerful organised states arose in two regions Sumer and Akkad. The famous city of Ur of the Chaldeas was already producing artistic masterpieces in the days of Mohenjo Daro. After about seven hundred years of lordship Ur was overthrown. The Babylonians who were a semitic people (that is like the Jews or Arabs) coming from Syria became the new rulers. The city of Babylon now became the centre of a new empire of which there is frequent reference in the Bible. There was a revival of literature during this period and epic poems were written and sung. These epic poems describing the beginning of the world and a mighty deluge are supposed to be the stories round which the earlier chapters of the Bible are written.

Then Babylon fell and many centuries afterwards (about 1000 B.C. and onwards) the Assyrians come on the scene and establish an empire with Nineveh for capital. These people were most extraordinary. They were brutal and cruel beyond measure. Their whole system of government was based on terrorism, and with massacre and destruction they built a great empire all over the Middle East. They were the imperialists of those days. And yet these people like wild beasts were highly cultured in some ways! An enormous library was collected at Nineveh, every department of current knowledge being represented. The library was not a paper one, I need hardly tell you, nor did it have

anything like the modern book. The books of those days were on tablets. Thousands of these tablets from the old library at Nineveh are at present in the British Museum in London. Some of them are pretty ghastly; the monarch gives a vivid description of his cruelty to his enemies and how he enjoyed it!

In India the Aryans came after the Mohenjo Daro period. No ruins or statuary of their early days has been discovered yet, but their greatest monuments are their old books—the Vedas and others—which give us an insight into the minds of these happy warriors who came down to the Indian plains. These books are full of powerful nature poetry; the very gods are nature gods. It was natural that when art developed this love of nature should play a great part in it. The Sanchi gates, which are situated near Bhopal, are among the earliest artistic remains discovered. They date from the early Buddhist period, and the beautiful carvings on these gates, of flowers and leaves and animal forms, tell us of the love and understanding of nature of the artists who made them.

And then from the north-west came Greek influence, for you will remember that after Alexander the Hellenic empires came right up to the Indian frontier; and later on there was the borderland empire of the Kushans which was also under Hellenic influence. Buddha was against image worship. He did not call himself a god or ask to be worshipped. He wanted to rid society of the evils which priestcraft had brought into it; he was a reformer trying to raise the fallen and the unhappy. "I have come," he said, in his first sermon at Isipatana or Sarnath, near Benares, "I have come to satisfy the ignorant with wisdom. The perfect man is nothing unless he spends himself in benefits to living beings, unless he consoles those who are abandoned. My doctrine is a doctrine of pity; that is why the happy ones of the world find it hard. The way to salvation is open to all. The Brahman came forth from the womb of a woman even as the Chandala to whom

he closes the way to salvation. Annihilate your passions as the elephant overturns a hut made of reeds. The only remedy against evil is sane reality." So Buddha taught the way of good conduct and the way of life. But, as is the way with foolish disciples who do not understand the inner meaning of the master, many of his followers observed the external rules of conduct that he had prescribed and did not appreciate their inner significance. Instead of following his advice they worshipped him. Still no statues of the Buddha rose, no images of him were made.

Then came ideas from Greece and other Hellenic countries and in these countries beautiful statues of the gods were made and these were worshipped. In Gandhara on the north-west of India this influence was greatest and the Buddha infant appeared in sculpture. Like their own little and charming god cupid he was, or as later the infant Christ was to be—the 'sacro bambino' as the Italians call him. In this way image worship began in Buddhism and it developed till statues of Buddha were to be found in every Buddhist temple.

Iranian or Persian influence also affected Indian art. The Buddha legends and the rich mythology of the Hindus provided inexhaustible material for India's artists, and at Amaravati in the Andhradesh, in the Elephanta caves near Bombay, at Ajanta and Ellore, and many other places, you can trace these old legends and myths in stone and paint. Wonderfully worth visiting these places are and I wish that every school girl and school boy could visit at least some of them.

The Indian legends travelled across the seas to Farther India. In Java, at Borobudur, there is the whole Buddha story in a series of remarkable frescoes in stone. ^{pa} In the ruins of Angkor Vat there are still many beautiful ^{cr} statues which remind us of the days eight hundred years ago when the city was known in Eastern Asia as "Angkor the Magnificent". The forces of these statues are gentle and full of life and there hovers over most of them a strange and elusive smile which has come to be known as

the 'Smile of Angkor'. This smile persists though the racial type changes and it never grows monotonous.

Art is a faithful mirror to the life and civilizations of a period. When Indian civilization was full of life, it created things of beauty and the arts flourished, and its echoes reached distant countries. But, as you know, stagnation and decay set in and as the country went to pieces the arts fell with it. They lost vigour and life and became over-burdened with detail and sometimes even grotesque. The coming of the Moslems shook them up and brought new influences which rid the degraded forms of Indian art of its over-ornamentations. The old Indian ideal remained at the back but it was dressed up simply and gracefully in the new garments from Arabia and Persia. In the past thousands of Indian master builders had gone from India to Central Asia. Now the architects and painters came from Western Asia to India. In Persia and Central Asia an artistic renaissance had taken place; in Constantinople great architects were putting up mighty buildings. This was also the period of the early Renaissance in Italy when a galaxy of great masters produced beautiful paintings and statues.

Sinan was the famous Turkish architect of the day, and Babar sent for his favourite pupil, Yusuf. In Iran Bihzad was the great painter and Akbar sent for several pupils of his and made them his court painters. Persian influence became dominant both in architecture and painting. I have told you in a previous letter of some of the great buildings of this Indo-Moslem art of Mughal India and you have seen many of them. The greatest triumph of this Indo-Persian art is the Taj Mahal. Many great artists helped to make it. It is said that the principal architect was a Turk or Persian named Ustad Isa and that he was assisted by Indian architects. Some European artists, and especially an Italian, are supposed to have worked at the interior decoration. In spite of so many different masters working at it, there is no jarring or contradictory element

in it. All the different influences are blended together to produce a wonderful harmony. So many people worked at the Taj. But the two influences which are predominant are the Persian and the Indian, and M. Grousset therefore calls it "the soul of Iran incarnate in the body of India".

THE PERSISTENCE OF IRAN'S OLD TRADITIONS

January 20, 1933

Let us go now to Persia, the country whose soul is said to have come to India and found a worthy body here in the Taj. Persian Art has a remarkable tradition. This tradition has persisted for over two thousand years, ever since the days of the Assyrians. There have been changes of governments and dynasties and religion, the country has been under foreign rule and under its own kings, Islam has come and revolutionised much, but this tradition has persisted. Of course it has changed and developed in the course of ages. This persistence, it is said, is due to the connection of Persian Art with the soil and scenery of Persia.

I told you earlier in this letter of the Assyrian Empire of Nineveh. This included Persia. About five or six hundred years before Christ, the Iranians, who were Aryans, captured Nineveh and put an end to the Assyrian Empire. The Persian-Aryans then built for themselves a great empire from the banks of the Indus right up to Egypt. They dominated the ancient world and their rulers are often referred to in Greek accounts as the 'Great King'. Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes are the names of some of these 'Great Kings'. You may remember them perhaps as Darius and Xerxes tried to conquer Greece and suffered defeat. This dynasty is called the Achaemenid dynasty. For 220 years it ruled a vast empire till Alexander the Great of Macedon put an end to it.

The Persians must have come as a great relief after the Assyrians and the Babylonians. They were civilized

and tolerant masters, allowing different religions and cultures to flourish. The huge empire was well administered and there was a network of good roads to facilitate communications from all parts. These Persians were Aryans, closely related to the Indo-Aryans, those who had come to India. Their religion—that of Zoroaster or Zarathustra—was related to the early Vedic religion. It seems clear that both had a common origin in the early home of the Aryans, wherever this may have been.

The Achaemenid Kings were great builders. In their capital city of Persepolis they built huge palaces—they did not build temples—with vast halls supported by numerous columns. Some ruins can still give an idea of these enormous structures. Achaemenid art seems to have kept contact with Indian art of the Maurya period (Ashoka, etc.), and influenced it.

Alexander defeated the 'Great King' Darius and ended the Achaemenid dynasty; there followed a brief period of Greek rule under Seleucus (who had been Alexander's general) and his successors, and a much longer period of Hellenic influence under semi-foreign rulers. The Kushans sitting on the Indian borderland and stretching out south to Benares and north in Central Asia, were contemporaries and they also were under Hellenic influence. Thus the whole of Asia west of India was under Greek influence for more than five hundred years after Alexander, right up to the third century after Christ. This influence was largely artistic. It did not interfere with the religion of Persia which continued to be Zoroastrianism.

In the third century there was a national revival in Persia and a new dynasty came on the throne. This was the Sasanid dynasty which was aggressively nationalistic and claimed to be the successor of the old Achaemenid kings. As usually happens with an aggressive nationalism, this was narrow and intolerant. It had to become so because it was wedged in between the Roman Empire and the Byzantine Empire of

Constantinople on the west and the advancing Turkish tribes on the east. Still it managed to carry on for more than four hundred years, right up to the coming of Islam. The Zoroastrian priesthood was all powerful under the Sasanids and their church controlled the state and was intolerant of all opposition. It was during this period that the final version of their sacred book, the Avestha, is said to have been prepared.

In India at this time the Gupta Empire flourished, and which was also a national revival after the Kushan and Buddhist periods. There was a renaissance of art and literature and some of the greatest of Sanskrit writers, like Kalidas, lived then. There are many indications that Persia of the Sasanids had artistic contacts with India of the Guptas. Few paintings or sculptures of the Sasanid period have remained to our day; such as have been found are full of life and movement, the animals being very similar to those in the Ajanta frescoes. Sasanid artistic influence seems to have extended right up to China and the Gobi desert.

Towards the end of their long rule the Sasanids became weak and Persia was in a bad way. After long warfare with the Byzantine empire both were thoroughly exhausted. It was not difficult for the Arab armies, full of ardour for their new faith, to conquer Persia. By the middle of the seventh century, within ten years of the death of the Prophet Mohammad, Persia was under the rule of the Caliph. As Arab armies spread to Central Asia and North Africa they carried with them not only their new religion but a young and growing civilization. Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt were all absorbed by Arabic culture. The Arabic language became their language and even racially they were assimilated. Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo became the great centres of Arabic culture, and many fine buildings arose there under the impetus of the new civilization. Even to-day all these countries are the Arabic countries and, though separated from each other, they dream of unity.

Persia was similarly conquered by the Arabs, but they could not absorb it or assimilate the people as they had done in Syria or Egypt. The Iranian race being of the old Aryan stock was further removed from the Semitic Arabs; their language was also an Aryan language. So the race remained apart and the language continued to flourish. Islam spread rapidly and displaced Zoroastrianism, which ultimately had to seek shelter in India. But even in Islam the Persians took their own line. There was a split and two parties arose, two branches of Islam—the Shias and the Sunnis. Persia became, and still is, predominantly a Shia country, while the rest of the Islamic world is mostly Sunni.

But though Persia was not assimilated to the Arab world, Arab civilization had a powerful influence on her; and Islam, as in India, gave new life to artistic activity. Arab art and culture was equally affected by Persian standards. Persian luxury invaded the households of the simple children of the desert and the court of the Arab Caliph became as gorgeous and magnificent as any other imperial court had been. Imperial Baghdad became the greatest city of the day. North of it in Samarra on the Tigris the Caliphs built for themselves an enormous mosque and palace, and ruins of which still exist. The mosque had vast halls and courtyards with fountains. The palace was a rectangle, of which one side was over a kilometre in length!

In the ninth century the empire of Baghdad decayed and split up into a number of states. Persia became independent, and Turkish tribes from the East formed many states, eventually seizing Persia itself and dominating the nominal Caliph of Baghdad. Mahmud of Ghazni arose at the beginning of the eleventh century and raided India, and threatened the Caliph and built for himself a brief-lived empire, to be ended by another Turkish tribe, the Seljuqs. The Seljuqs faced and fought for long, and with success, the Christian crusaders, and their empire lasted for a hundred and fifty years. Towards the end of the twelfth century yet another Turkish

tribe drove out the Seljuqs from Persia and established the kingdom of Khwarism⁵ or Khiva. But this had brief life for Chengiz Khan, indignant at the insult offered to his ambassador by the Shah of Khwarism, came with his Mongols and crushed the land and the people utterly.

In a brief paragraph I have told of many changes and many empires, and you must be sufficiently confused. I have mentioned these ups and downs of dynasties and races not to burden your mind with them, but to point how the artistic tradition and life of Persia continued in spite of them. Tribe after tribe of Turks came from the East and they succumbed to the mixed Arabic-Persian civilization which prevailed from Bokhara to Iraq. Those Turks who managed to reach Asia Minor, far from Persia, stuck to their own ways and refused to give in to the Arabic culture. They made Asia Minor almost a bit of their native Turkistan. But in Persia and round about it, such was the strength of the old Iranian culture that they accepted it and adapted themselves to it. Under all the various Turkish dynasties that ruled, Persian art and literature flourished. I have told you, I think, of the Persian poet Firdausi who lived at the time of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. At Mahmud's request he wrote a great national epic of Persia, the *Shāhnāma*, and the scenes described in this book lie in pre-Islamic days, and the great hero is Rustam. This shows us how closely tied up was Persian art and literature with the old national and traditional past. Most of the subjects for Persian paintings and beautiful miniatures are taken from the stories of the *Shāhnāma*.

Firdausi lived at the turn of the century and the millennium, from 932 to 1021. Soon after him came a name famous in English as it is in Persian—Omar Khayyam, the astronomer-poet of Nishapur in Persia. And Omar was followed by Sheikh Sadi of Shiraz, one of the greatest of Persian poets, whose *Gulistān* and *Būstān* school boys in Indian *maktabs* have had to learn by heart for generations past.

I mention just a few names of the great. There is

no point in my giving you long lists of names. But I wish you to realise that the lamp of Persian art and culture was shining brightly right through these centuries from Persia to Transaxiana in Central Asia. Great cities like Bokhara and Balkh of Transaxiana rivalled the cities of Persia as centres of artistic and literary activity. It was at Bokhara that Ibn Sina or Avicenna, the most famous of Arab philosophers, was born at the end of the tenth century. It was in Balkh two hundred years later that another great Persian poet was born, Jalaluddin Rumi. He is considered a great mystic, and he founded the order of the dancing dervishes.

So in spite of war and conflict and political changes the tradition of Arab-Persian art and culture continued to be a living one and produced many masterpieces both in literature and painting and architecture. Then came disaster. In the thirteenth century (about 1220) Chengiz Khan swept down and destroyed Khwarism and Iran, and a few years later Hulagu destroyed Baghdad, and the accumulations of long centuries of high culture were swept. I have told you in some previous letter how the Mongols converted Central Asia almost into a wilderness and how its great cities were deserted and became almost devoid of human life.

Central Asia never fully recovered from this calamity; and it is surprising enough that it recovered to the extent it did. You may remember that after Chengiz Khan's death his vast empire was divided up. The part of it in Persia and round about fell to Hulagu, who after having had his fill of destruction, settled down as a peaceful and tolerant ruler, and founded the dynasty of the Il-khans. These Il-khans for some time continued to profess the old Sky religion of the Mongols; later they were converted to Islam. Both before and after this conversion they were completely tolerant of other religions. Their cousins in China, the Great Khan and his family, were Buddhists and with them they had the most intimate relations. They even sent for brides all

the way from China !

These contacts between the two branches of the Mongols in Persia and China had considerable effect on art. Chinese influence crept into Persia and a curious blend of Arabic and Persian and Chinese influence appears in the paintings. But again the Persian element, in spite of all disasters, triumphed. In the middle of the fourteenth century Persia produced another great poet, Hafiz, who is still popular even in India.

The Mongol Il-khans did not last long. Their last remnants were destroyed by another great warrior, Timur, of Samarkand in Transoxiana. This terrible and most cruel savage, about whom I have written to you, was quite a patron of arts and was considered a learned man ! His love of the arts seems to have consisted chiefly in sacking great cities like Delhi, Shiraz, Baghdad and Damascus and carrying away the loot to adorn his own capital, Samarkand. But Samarkand's most wonderful and imposing structure is Timur's tomb, the Gur Amir. It is a fit mausoleum for him, for there is something of his commanding presence and strength and fierce spirit in its noble outlines.

The vast territories that Timur had conquered fell away after his death but a relatively small domain, including Transoxiana and Persia, remained for his successors. For a full hundred years, right through the fifteenth century, these 'Timurids', as they were called, held sway over Iran and Bokhara and Herat and, strangely enough, these descendants of a ruthless conqueror, became famous for their generosity and humanity and encouragement of the arts. Timur's own son, Shah Rukh, was the greatest of them. He founded a magnificent library at Herat, which was his capital, and crowds of literary men were attracted to it.

This Timurid period of a hundred years is so noteworthy for its artistic and literary movements that it is known as the 'Timurid Renaissance'. There was a rich development of Persian literature and large numbers of fine pictures were painted. Bihzad, the great painter,

being the head of a school of painting. It is interesting to note that side by side with Persian, Turkish literature also developed in the Timurid literary circles. This was also the period, to remind you again, of the Renaissance in Italy.

The Timurids were Turks and they had succumbed largely to Persian culture. Iran, dominated by Turks and Mongols, imposed its own culture on the conquerors. At the same time Persia struggled to free itself politically and gradually the Timurids were driven more and more to the east and their domain became smaller round Transaxiana. At the beginning of the sixteenth century Iranian nationalism triumphed and the Timurids were finally driven out from Persia. A national dynasty, the Safavi or Safavids came on the Persian throne. It was the second of this dynasty, Tahmasp I, who gave refuge to Humayun fleeing from India before Sher Khan.

The Safavi period lasted for two hundred and twenty years from 1502 to 1722. It is called the golden age of Persian art. Isfahan the capital was filled with splendid buildings and became a famous artistic centre, especially for painting. Shah Abbas who ruled from 1587 to 1629 was the outstanding sovereign of this dynasty and he is considered one of Persia's greatest rulers. He was hemmed in by the Uzbeks on one side and the Ottoman Turks on the other. He drove away both and built up a strong state, cultivated relations with distant states in the west and elsewhere, and devoted himself to beautifying his capital. The town planning of Shah Abbas in Isfahan has been called "a masterpiece of classical purity and taste". The buildings that were made were not only beautiful in themselves and finely decorated but the charm of the setting enhanced the effect. European travellers who visited Persia at the time give glowing descriptions.

Architecture, literature, paintings both frescoes and miniatures, beautiful carpets, fine faience work and mosaics, all flourished during this golden age of Persian art. Some of the fresco paintings and miniatures are

of an amazing loveliness. Art does not, or should not, know national boundaries, and many influences must have gone to enrich this Persian art of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Italian influence, it is said, is evident. But behind all there is the old artistic tradition of Iran, which persisted through two thousand years. And the sphere of Iranian culture was not confined to Persia. It spread over a vast area from Turkey on the west to India on the east. The Persian language was the language of culture in the Mughal courts in India, and in Western Asia generally, as French used to be in Europe. The old spirit of Persian art has left an immortal emblem in the Taj Mahal at Agra. In much the same way this art has influenced Ottoman architecture as far west as Constantinople, and many a famous building grew up there with the impress of Persian influence.

The Safavis in Persia were more or less contemporaneous with the Great Mughals in India. Babar, the first of the Indian Mughals, was one of the Timurid princes of Samargand. As the Persians had gained strength they had driven the Timurids away, and only parts of Transaxiana and Afghanistan remained under various Timurid princes. Babar had to fight from the age of twelve among these petty princes. He succeeded and made himself ruler of Kabul and then came to India. The high culture of the Timurids at the time can be judged from Babar, from whose memoirs I gave you some quotations in a previous letter. Shah Abbas, the greatest of the Safavi rulers was a contemporary of Akbar and Jehangir. Between the two countries all along there must have been the most intimate contact. For long they had a common frontier as Afghanistan was part of the Mughal Indian Empire.

IMPERIALISM AND NATIONALISM IN PERSIA

January 21, 1933

You are entitled to have a grievance against me. I have given you sufficient provocation by rushing backwards and forwards in the various corridors of history. After having reached, by many different routes, the nineteenth century, I have suddenly taken you back a few thousand years and jumped about from Egypt to India and China and Persia. This must be aggravating and confusing, and I have no good answer to the protest which I can almost hear you making. The reading of M. Rene Grousset's books suddenly started many lines of thought in my head and I could not help sharing some of them with you. I felt also that I had neglected Persia in these letters and I wanted to make some reparation for this omission. And now that we have been considering Persia we might as well carry on her story to modern times.

I have told you of the old traditions and high accomplishments of Persian culture, of the golden age of Persian art, and so on and so forth. On looking at these phrases again, the language seems rather flowery and somewhat misleading. One might almost think that a real golden age had come to the people of Persia, and their miseries vanished away and they lived happily like people in fairy tales. Of course no such thing happened. Culture and art in those days, and even now to a large extent, were the monopoly of a few; the masses, the average person had nothing to do with them. The life of the masses indeed from the earliest days has been a constant struggle for food and the necessities of

life; it has not differed greatly from the life of the animals. They had no time or leisure for anything else; enough and more than enough for the day was the evil thereof; how could they think or appreciate art and culture? Art flourished in Persia and India and China and Italy and the other countries of Europe as a pastime for the courts and the rich and leisured classes. As religious art to some extent it touched the life of the masses.

But an artistic court did not signify good government; rulers who prided themselves for their patronage of art and literature were often enough incompetent and cruel as rulers. The whole system of society in Persia, as in most other countries at the time, was more or less feudal. Strong kings became popular because they stopped many of the petty exactions of the feudal lords. There were periods of relatively good rule and other periods of thoroughly bad rule.

Just when Mughal rule was on its last legs in India, the Safavi dynasty came to an end about 1725. As usual the dynasty had played itself out. Feudalism was gradually breaking up and economic changes were going on in the country which had upset the old order. Heavy taxation made matters worse, and discontent spread among the people. The Afghans, who were then under the Safavis, rose in revolt and not only succeeded in their own country but seized Isfahan and deposed the Shah. So ended the Safavis. The Afghans were soon driven out by a Persian chief, Nadir Shah, who later took the crown himself. It was this Nadir Shah who raided India, during the last days of the decrepit Mughals, massacred the people of Delhi, and took away vast treasure, including the Peacock Throne of Shah Jehan.

Persian history during the eighteenth century is a dismal record of civil war and changing rules and misrules. In a bad lot one of the rulers stands out for his amazing cruelty; he seems to have been indeed a "blood thirsty monster," as he has been called.

The nineteenth century brought new troubles. Persia was coming into conflict with the expanding and aggressive imperialism of Europe. To the north, Russia was ceaselessly pressing, and the British were pushing up from the Persian Gulf in the South. Persia was not far from India; their frontiers were gradually approaching each other, and indeed to-day there is a common frontier between them. Persia was on the direct route to India and overlooked the sea route to India. The whole of British policy was based on the protection of their Indian empire and the routes leading to it. In no event were they prepared to see their great rival Russia sitting astride this route and looking hungrily at India. So both the British and the Russians took a very lively interest in Persia and harassed the poor country. The Shahs were thoroughly incompetent and foolish and usually played into their hands either by trying to fight them at the wrong moment or by fighting their own people. Persia might have been wholly occupied by Russia or England and annexed or made a protectorate like Egypt but for the rivalry between these two powers. There was a war between Persia and Russia which ended in Russia getting what she wanted, in the middle of the century. Persia had to fight England and this resulted in England extorting whatever she cared to have.

At the beginning of the twentieth century Persia became the object of greed for another reason. Oil or petroleum was discovered and this was very valuable, especially since the wide use of the automobile. The old Shah was induced to give a very favourable concession for the exploitation of the oil fields in Persia to a British subject, D'Arcy, in 1901 for the long period of sixty years. Some years later a British company. The Anglo-Persian Oil Company was formed to work the oil fields. This Company has been working there since, and has made huge profits out of this oil business. A small part of the profits went to the Persian government, but a great part went outside the country to the shareholders of the Company, and among the biggest

shareholders is the British government. The present Persian government is strongly nationalistic and objects very much to being exploited by foreigners. Only two or three months ago they cancelled the old sixty year D'Arcy contract of 1901 under which the Anglo-Persian Oil Company had been working. They said that the conditions were unfair to Persia and the old Shah had no business to grant away the country's wealth in this way as if it was his private property. The British government is of course very annoyed at this and tried to threaten and bully the Persian government, forgetting that times have changed and it is not so easy to bully people in Asia now. The quarrel has been referred to the League of Nations for decision.

But I am anticipating future history. As imperialism threatened Persia and the Shah became more and more its tool, inevitably it led to the growth of nationalism. A nationalist party was formed. This party resented foreign interference and it objected equally strongly to the Shah's autocracy. They demanded a democratic constitution and modern reforms. The country was misgoverned and heavily taxed, and the British and Russians were continually interfering. The reactionary Shah felt more at ease with these foreign governments than with his own people, who were demanding a measure of freedom. This demand for a democratic constitution came chiefly from the new middle classes and the intellectuals. The victory of Japan over Tsarist Russia in 1904 impressed and excited the Persian nationalists greatly, both because it was a victory of an Asiatic Power over a European one, and because Tsarist Russia was their own aggressive and troublesome neighbour. The Russian revolution of 1905, although it failed and was ruthlessly crushed, added to the enthusiasm and desire for action of the Persian nationalists. The pressure on the Shah was so great that reluctantly he agreed to a democratic constitution in 1906. The national Assembly, called the "Majlis", was established and the Persian Revolution seemed to have

succeeded.

But there was trouble ahead. The Shah had no intention of effacing himself, and the Russians and British had no love for a democratic Persia which might become strong and troublesome. There was conflict between the Shah and the Majlis, and the Shah actually bombarded his own parliament. But the people and the troops were with the Majlis and the nationalists and the Shah was only saved by Russian troops. The Shahs were really helpless against their own people. The real danger lay from the foreign powers. Both Russia and England had, under some pretext or other, usually the excuse of protecting their subjects, brought their own troops and kept them. The Russians had their dreaded Cossacks and the British utilised Indian troops to bully the Persians with whom we had no quarrel.

Persia was in great difficulties. It had no money, and the condition of the people was bad. The Majlis tried hard to improve matters; but most of their efforts were scotched by the opposition of either the Russians or the British or both. Eventually they looked for help to America and appointed an able American financier to help them in reforming their finances. This American, Morgan Shuster, tried his best to do so, but always he came up against the solid walls of Russian or British opposition. Disgusted and disheartened, he left the country and returned home. In a book Shuster wrote afterwards he gave the story of how Russian and British imperialism was crushing the life out of Persia. The very name of the book is significant and tells a tale—*The Strangling of Persia*.

Persia seemed destined to disappear as an independent state. The first step towards this end had already been taken by Russia and England by dividing up the country into their "spheres of influence". Their soldiers occupied important centres; British company exploited the oil resources. Persia was in a thoroughly miserable condition. Outright annexation by a foreign power might even have been better, for this would have brought some

responsibility with it. Then came the outbreak of the World War in 1914.

Persia declared her neutrality in this war, but the declarations of the weak have little effect on the strong. Persia's neutrality was ignored by all the parties concerned, and foreign armies came and fought each other, regardless of what the unhappy Persian government thought of the matter. All round Persia were countries who were in the war. England and Russia were allies on one side, Turkey, whose dominions included at the time Iraq and Arabia, was an ally of Germany. The war ended in the victory of England, France and their allies in 1918 and Persia was then wholly occupied by British forces. England was on the point of declaring a protectorate over Persia—a mild form of annexation—and there were also dreams of a vast British Middle Eastern Empire from the Mediterranean to Baluchistan and India. But the dreams did not come true. Unfortunately for Britain, Tsarist Russia had gone and in her place there was now a Soviet Russia. Also unfortunately for Britain, her plans went astray in Turkey and Kemal Pasha rescued his country from the very jaws of the Allies.

All this helped the Persian nationalists and Persia succeeded in remaining nominally free. In 1921 a Persian soldier Riza Khan came to prominence by a *coup d'état*. He gained control of the army and later became prime minister. In 1925 the old Shah was deposed and Riza Khan was elected the new Shah by the vote of a Constituent Assembly. He took the name and title of Riza Shah Pahlavi.

Riza Shah has reached the throne peacefully and by methods which were outwardly democratic. The Majlis still functions and the new Shah does not presume to be an autocratic monarch. It is clear, however, that he is the strong man at the helm of the Persian government. He appears to be a capable man, and from all accounts he is popular. Persia has changed greatly during the last few years and Riza Shah is bent on many reforms so that

the country might become modernised. There is a strong national revival, which has put new life into the country, and which is taking the shape of an aggressive nationalism wherever foreign interests in Persia are concerned. As a result of this nationalism and growing self-reliance the trouble over Persian oil has arisen.

It is most interesting to note also that this national revival is in the true Persian tradition of two thousand years. It looks back to the early days, prior to Islam, of Persia's greatness and tries to draw its inspiration from them. The very name which Riza Shah has adopted, as a dynasty name—'Pahlavi'—takes one back to the old days. The people of Persia are of course Muslims, Shia Muslims, but in so far as their country is concerned, nationalism is a more powerful force. All over Asia this is happening. In Europe this took place a hundred years earlier, in the nineteenth century, but already nationalism is considered by many people there to be an outworn creed and they look for new faiths and beliefs which fit in more with existing conditions.

ABOUT REVOLUTIONS GENERALLY AND
ESPECIALLY THOSE OF EIGHTEEN
FORTY-EIGHT IN EUROPE

January 28, 1933
Īdu'l-Fitr

We must now go back to Europe and have another look at the intricate and ever changing picture of this continent during the nineteenth century. Already in some letters written two months ago, we surveyed this century and I pointed out some of its leading characteristics. You can hardly be expected to remember all the 'isms' I mentioned then: industrialism and capitalism and imperialism and socialism and nationalism and internationalism—to repeat a few of them! I told you also of democracy and science, and the tremendous revolutions in methods of transport, and popular education and its product, the modern newspaper. All these things, and many more, made up the civilization of Europe then—the bourgeois civilization in which the new middle classes controlled the industrial machine under the capitalist system. This civilization of bourgeois Europe went from success to success; it climbed height after height; and toward the end of the century it had impressed itself and all the world with its might, when disaster came.

In Asia we have also seen in some detail this civilization in action. Urged on by its growing industrialism, Europe stretched its limbs to distant lands and tried to grab them and control them and generally to interfere with them to its own advantage. By Europe here I mean especially Western Europe which had taken the lead in industrialism, and, of all these western

countries, England was for long the unquestioned leader, far ahead of the others and profiting greatly by this lead.

All these vast changes that were going on in England and the west were not evident to the kings and emperors early in the century. They did not, and indeed few others did, realise the importance of the new forces that were being generated. After Napoleon had been finally removed, the one thought of these rulers of Europe was to preserve themselves and their kind for evermore, to make the world safe for autocracy. They had not wholly recovered from the terrible fright of the French Revolution and Napoleon, and they wanted to take no more chances. As I have told you in a previous letter, they allied themselves in Holy Alliances and the like to preserve the 'divine right of kings' to do what they chose, and to prevent the people from raising their heads. Autocracy and religion joined hands for this purpose as they had often done before. The Tsar Alexander of Russia was the moving spirit in these alliances. No breath of industrialism or the new spirit had reached his country and Russia was in a medieval and very backward condition. There were few big cities, commerce was little developed, and even handicrafts were not of a high order. Autocracy flourished unchecked. Conditions were different in other European countries. As one went west the middle classes were more and more in evidence. In England, as I have told you, there was no autocracy. The king was kept in check by Parliament; but Parliament itself was controlled by a handful of the rich. There was a great deal of difference between the autocrat of the Russias and this rich ruling oligarchy of England. But they had one thing in common—fear of the masses and of revolution.

So all over Europe reaction triumphed and everything that had a liberal look about it was ruthlessly suppressed. By the decisions of the Congress of Vienna in 1815 many nationalities, for instance in Italy and Eastern Europe, had been placed under alien rule. They

had to be kept down by force. But this kind of thing cannot be done successfully for long; there is bound to be trouble. It is like trying to hold the lid of a steaming kettle down. Europe simmered with steam and repeatedly the steam forced itself out. I have told you in a previous letter of the risings in 1830 when several changes took place in Europe, notably in France where the Bourbons were finally driven out. These risings frightened the kings and emperors and their ministers all the more, and they suppressed and repressed the people with greater energy.

In the course of these letters we have often come across great changes in countries brought about by wars and revolutions. Wars in the past were sometimes religious wars and sometimes dynastic, that is struggles for supremacy between different members of the ruling families; often they were political invasions of one nationality by another. Behind all these causes there was usually some economic cause also. Thus most of the invasions by the Central Asian tribes of Europe and Asia were due to their being driven by hunger westward. Or economic progress may strengthen people or nation and give them an advantage over others. I have pointed out to you that even in the so-called religious wars in Europe and elsewhere the economic factor was at work in the background. As we approach modern times we find that religious and dynastic wars cease. War of course does not end. Unhappily it becomes more virulent. But its causes now are obviously political and economic. The political causes are chiefly connected with nationalism; the suppression of one nation by another, or the conflict between two aggressive nationalisms. Even this conflict is largely due to economic causes, such as, the demand by modern industrial countries for raw materials and markets. So we find that economic causes become more and more important in war, and indeed to-day they shadow everything else.

Revolutions have undergone the same kind of change

in the past. Early revolutions were usually palace revolutions; members of the ruling families intriguing against each other and fighting and murdering each other; or an exasperated populace rising and putting an end to a tyrant; or ambitious soldier seizing the throne with the help of the army. Many of these palace revolutions took place right at the top, and the mass of the people were not much affected by them and they seldom cared. The rulers at the top changed, but the system remained the same, and the lives of the people went on as before. Of course a bad ruler at the top might tyrannise a great deal and become unbearable; a better ruler might be more tolerable. But whether the ruler was good or bad, the social and economic position of the people would not usually change by a mere political change. The ruling classes would remain the ruling classes and the other classes would also remain where they were right down in the scale. There would be no social revolution.

National revolutions involve a greater change. When a nation is ruled by another, an alien ruling class sits on the top. This is injurious in many ways, as the subject country is ruled for the benefit of another country, or of a foreign class benefiting by such rule. Of course it hurts very greatly the self-respect of the subject people. Besides all this, the alien ruling class at the top keeps out the upper classes of the subject country from positions of power and authority, which they might have otherwise occupied. A successful national revolution at least removes the foreign element, and the dominant elements in the country immediately take its place. Thus the dominant classes profit greatly by the removal of the superior alien class; the country generally profits because it will not then be ruled in the interests of another country. The other classes lower in the scale may not profit much, unless the national revolution is accompanied by a social revolution also.

A social revolution is a very different affair from the other revolutions which merely change things at the top.

It involves a political revolution also, but it is something much more than that as it changes the fabric of society. The English Revolution, which made Parliament supreme, was not only a political revolution but partly a social one also as it meant the association of the richer bourgeoisie with those in power. This upper bourgeois class thus went up in the scale; the lower bourgeoisie and the masses generally were not affected and they continued at the bottom. The French Revolution was even more a social revolution. As we have seen, it upset the whole order of society and, for a while, even the masses came up. Ultimately the bourgeoisie triumphed here also and the masses were sent back to their place at the bottom, having played their role in the revolution; but the privileged nobles at the top were removed.

It is obvious that such social revolutions are much more thoroughgoing affairs than merely political changes, and they are intimately connected with social conditions. An ambitious over-eager person or group cannot bring about a social revolution, unless conditions are such that the masses are ready for it. By their being ready I do not mean that they are consciously prepared after being told to be so. I mean that social and economic conditions are such that life is becoming too great a burden for them and they can find no relief or adjustment except in such a change. As a matter of fact for ages past life has been such a burden for vast numbers of people, and it is amazing how they have tolerated it. Sometimes they have broken out in revolt, chiefly peasant revolts and jacqueries, and in their mad anger blindly destroyed what they could lay hands upon. But these people were not conscious of any desire to change the social order. In spite of this ignorance, however, there were repeatedly breakdowns of the existing social conditions in the past, in ancient Rome, in the Middle Ages in Europe, in India, in China, and many an empire has fallen because of them.

In the past social and economic changes took place

slowly, and, for long ages, methods of production and distribution and transport remained much the same. People, therefore, did not notice the process of change and thought that the old social order was permanent and unchangeable. Religion put a divine halo round this order and the customs and beliefs which went with it and people became so convinced of this that they never thought of changing the order even when conditions were so changed that it was manifestly inapplicable. With the coming of the Industrial Revolution and the vast changes in method of transport, social changes became much swifter. New classes came to the front and became wealthy. A new industrial working class arose very different from the artisans and field labourers. All this required a new economic arrangement and political changes. Western Europe was in a curious state of misfit. A wise society would make the necessary changes whenever the need for them arises, and so derive full benefit from changing conditions. But societies are not wise and they do not think as a whole. Individuals think of themselves and what will profit them; classes of people having similar interests do likewise. If a class is at the top in any society it wants to remain there and to profit by exploiting the other classes below it. Wisdom and foresight would demonstrate that in the long run the best way of profiting oneself is to profit society as a whole of which one is a member. But a person or class in power wants to stick to what it has got. The best way of doing so is to make the other classes and people believe that the existing social order is the very best possible. Religion is dragged in to impress this on the people; education is made to teach the same lesson; till at length, amazing as it is, almost everyone believes in it absolutely and does not think of changing it. Even the people at the bottom actually believe that it is right for them to remain there and to be kicked and cuffed, and to starve though others live in plenty.

So people imagine that there is an unchanging social

system and it is nobody's fault if the majority suffer under it. It is their own fault, it is kismet, it is fate, it is the punishment for past sins. Society is always conservative and dislikes changes. It loves to remain in the rut it has got into and firmly believes that it was meant to remain there. So much so that it punishes most those individuals who, wishing to improve its condition, tell it to come out of the rut.

But social and economic conditions do not wait for the pleasure of the complacent and unthinking in society. They march on, although peoples' ideas remain the same. The distance between these out of date notions and reality becomes greater, and if something is not done to reduce this distance and to bring the two together, the system creaks and there is a catastrophe. This is what brings about real social revolutions. If conditions are such a revolution is bound to come, though it may be delayed by the drag of old fashioned ideas. If conditions are not such then a few individuals, however much they may try, cannot bring it about. When a revolution does break out, the veil that had hidden the actual conditions from the people is removed and understanding comes to them very soon. Once they are out of the rut, they rush ahead. That is why during revolutionary periods people go forward with tremendous energy. Thus revolution is the inevitable result of conservatism and holding back. If society could always keep out of the rut, and never fall into the foolish error that there is an unchanging social order, but would always keep in line with changing conditions, there would be no social revolution. There would then be continuous evolution.

I have written, without any previous intention of doing so, at some length about revolutions. The subject interests me, for to-day all over the world there appears to be misfits and the social system seems to be breaking down in many places. This has been the herald of social revolution in the past, and one is naturally led to believe that we are on the eve of great changes in the world. In India, as in every country under foreign domination,

nationalism and the desire to rid the country of alien rule is strong. But to a great extent this nationalistic urge is confined to the well-to-do classes. The peasantry and the workers and others, who live in perpetual want, are naturally more interested in filling their empty stomachs than in vague nationalistic dreams. For them nationalism or *Swarāj* has no meaning, unless it brings with it more food and better conditions. Therefore, in India also to-day the problem is not merely a political one; even more so it is a social one.

I have been led to this long digression about revolutions, because of the many revolts and other disturbances in Europe during the nineteenth century which I was considering. Many of these revolts, and especially in the first half of the century, were nationalistic risings against foreign rule. Side by side with these, in the industrialized countries, ideas of social revolt began to spread the conflict of the new working class with its capitalist masters. People began to think about and work consciously for the social revolution.

The year 1848 is called the year of revolutions in Europe. There were risings in many countries, some partly successful, but mostly ending in failure. A suppressed nationalism was at the back of the risings in Poland, Italy, Bohemia and Hungary. The Polish revolt was against Prussia; the Bohemian and the North Italian against Austria. They were all suppressed. The Hungarian revolt against Austria was the biggest of all. Its leader was Lojos Kossuth, who is famous in Hungarian history as a patriot and a fighter for freedom. In spite of two years of resistance this revolt also was suppressed. Some years later Hungary gained a good deal of what it aimed at by a different method of fighting under another great leader, Deak. It is interesting to note that Deak's methods were those of passive resistance. In 1867 Hungary and Austria were joined together, more or less on an equal basis, to form, what was called, a 'dual monarchy' under the Hapsburgh Emperor Francis Joseph. Deak's methods of passive resistance became a

model half a century later for the Irish against the English. When Bapu started Non-cooperation in India in 1920, some people remembered Deak's struggle. But there was a great deal of difference between the two methods.

There were revolts in Germany also in 1848 but they were not very serious; they were suppressed and a promise of some reforms made. In France there was a big change. Ever since the Bourbons had been driven out in 1830 Louis Philippe had been king, a kind of semi-constitutional monarch. By 1848 the people had enough of him and he was made to abdicate. A republic was set up again. This is called the second Republic as the first one was during the great Revolution. Taking advantage of the confusion, a nephew of Napoleon, named Louis Bonaparte, came to Paris and, posing as a great friend of liberty, got himself elected as president of the Republic. This was just a pretence to gain power. Having fully established himself, he gained control of the army and in 1851 there was, what is called, a *coup d'état*. He over-awed Paris by his soldiers, shot down many people and terrorised the Assembly. The next year he made himself emperor, calling himself Napoleon III as the great Napoleon's son was supposed to be Napoleon II although he had never reigned. So ended the second Republic after a brief and inglorious career of a little over four years. Of Napoleon III I shall tell you something more later.

In England there was no revolt in 1848 but there was a great deal of trouble and disturbance. England has a way of bending when real trouble threatens and so avoiding it. Her constitution, being flexible, helps in this, and long practice has made the Englishman accept some compromise when there is no other way out. In this way he has managed to avoid big and sudden changes which have often come to other countries with more rigid constitutions and less compromising people. In 1832 there was a great agitation all over England over a Reform Bill, which gave the vote for electing members

to Parliament to some more people. Judged by modern standards, it was a very moderate and inoffensive bill. Only some more of the middle classes got the vote, the workers and most people still did not get it. But Parliament was then in the hands of a small number of rich persons, and they were afraid of losing their privileges and their "rotten boroughs" which returned them to the House of Commons without any trouble. So these people opposed the Reform Bill with all their might and said that England would go to the dogs, and the world would come to an end, if the Bill was passed ! England was on the verge of civil war when the opposition got frightened by popular agitation in favour of the Bill and disturbances, and the Bill was passed. Needless to say the world survived it and Parliament continued, as before, to be controlled by the rich. The well-to-do middle classes gained just a little more power.

About 1848 another great agitation shook the country. This was called the Chartist Agitation, because it was proposed to present a monster petition to Parliament containing a 'People's charter' demanding various reforms. After frightening the ruling classes greatly the movement was suppressed. There was a great deal of distress and discontent among the working classes in the factories. About this time some labour laws began to be passed and these improved the lot of the workers a little. England was making a great deal of money by its rising trade; it was becoming the 'workshop of the world'. Most of these profits went to the owners of the factories; only a small part of them trickled down to the workers. All this helped in preventing a rising in 1848. But at the time it seemed a near thing.

I have not finished with the year 1848 yet; the story of what happened in Rome that year still remains to be told. I must carry that over to the next letter.

ITALY BECOMES A UNITED AND FREE NATION

January 30, 1933
Vasanta Panchamī

In my account of 1848 I have kept the story of Italy for the last. Of all the exciting happenings of the year 1848 the heroic struggle in Rome was the most fascinating.

Italy before Napoleon's time was a patch-work of little states and petty princes. Napoleon united it for a short while. After Napoleon it reverted to its previous state, or something even worse. The victorious allies at the Congress of Vienna of 1815 very considerably divided up the country among themselves. Austria took Venice and a great deal of territory round it; several Austrian princes were provided with choice morsels; the Pope came back to Rome and the states round it, called the Papal States; Naples and the South went to form the kingdom of the two Sicilies under a Bourbon king; to the north-west near the French frontier, there was a king of Piedmont and Sardinia. All these petty kings and princes, with the exception of Piedmont, ruled in a most autocratic way and oppressed their subjects even more than they or others had done before Napoleon came. But Napoleon's visit had shaken up Italy and inspired the youth with dreams of a free and united Italy. In spite of the oppression of the rulers, or perhaps because of it, there were many petty risings and wide-spread secret societies were formed.

Soon there emerged an ardent young man who came to be acknowledged as the leader of the freedom movement. This was Guiseppe Mazzini, the prophet of

Italian nationalism. In 1831 he organized a society, *Giovane Italia*—Young Italy, with the aim of an Italian Republic. For many years he worked for this cause in Italy and was an exile, often risking his life. Many of his writings became classics in the literature of nationalism. In 1848 when revolts were breaking out all over North Italy, Mazzini saw his chance and came to Rome. The Pope was driven away and a republic declared under a committee of three—Triumvirs they were called, a word from old Roman history. Mazzini was one of these three Triumvirs. This young republic was attacked on all sides: by the Austrians, by the Neapolitans, even by the French who came to restore the Pope. The chief fighter on the side of the Roman Republic was Garibaldi. He held the Austrians and defeated the Neapolitan armies and even stopped the French. All this was done with the help of volunteers, and the bravest and best of the youth of Rome gave their lives in defence of the Republic. Eventually, after a heroic struggle the Roman Republic fell to the French who brought back the Pope.

So ended the first phase of the struggle. Mazzini and Garibaldi carried on their work in different ways, by propaganda and preparation for the next big effort. They were very unlike each other; one was a thinker and an idealist, the other was a soldier with a genius for guerilla warfare. Both were fiercely devoted to Italian freedom and unity. A third player in this great game then became prominent. This was Cavour, the Prime Minister of Victor Emmanuel, king of Piedmont. Cavour was chiefly interested in making Victor Emmanuel king of Italy. As this involved the suppression and removal of many of the petty princes he was perfectly prepared to take advantage of Mazzini's and Garibaldi's activities. He intrigued with the French—Napoleon III was the ruler in France then—and involved them in a war with his enemies the Austrians. This was in 1859. Garibaldi took advantage of the defeat of the Austrians by the French to lead an extraordinary

expedition on his own account against the king of Naples and Sicily. This was the famous expedition of Garibaldi and his thousand red shirts, untrained men without proper arms or material, who met the trained armies pitched against them. The thousand red shirts were greatly outnumbered but their enthusiasm and the good will of the populace led them from victory to victory. The fame of Garibaldi spread. Such was the magic of his name that armies melted away at his approach. Still his task was a difficult one and many a time Garibaldi and his volunteers were on the verge of defeat and disaster. But even in the hour of defeat fortune smiled upon him, as it often does on desperate ventures, and turned the defeat into victory.

Garibaldi and the thousand landed in Sicily. From there slowly they worked their way up to Italy. As he marched through the villages of South Italy, Garibaldi appealed for volunteers and the rewards he offered them were unusual. "Come!" he said, "Come! he who stays at home is a coward. I promise you weariness, hardship, and battles. But we will conquer or die". Nothing succeeds like success. Garibaldi's early successes whipped up the spirit of nationalism of the Italians. Volunteers poured in and they marched north singing Garibaldi's hymn:

"The tombs are uncovered, the dead come from far,
The Ghosts of our martyrs are rising to war,
With swords in their hands, and with laurels of fame,
And dead hearts still glowing with Italy's name.

Come join them! Come follow, O youth of our land!
Come fling out our banner, and marshal our band!
Come all with cold steel, and come all with hot fire,
Come all with the flame of Italia's desire!

Begone from Italia, begone from our home!
Begone from Italia, O stranger, begone."

How similar are national songs everywhere.

Cavour took advantage of Garibaldi's successes and the result of all this was that Victor Emmanuel of Piedmont became king of Italy in 1861. Rome was

still under French troops; Venice under the Austrians. Within ten years both Venice and Rome joined the rest of Italy and Rome became the capital. Italy was at last one united nation. But Mazzini was not happy. All his life he had laboured for the republican ideal and now Italy was but the kingdom of Victor Emmanuel of Piedmont. It is true that the new kingdom was a constitutional one and an Italian Parliament met at Turin immediately after Victor Emmanuel became king.

So Italy, the nation, was united again and free from foreign rule. Three men brought this about—Mazzini, Garibaldi and Cavour—and perhaps if any one of these had not been there, the freedom would have longer in coming. George Meredith, the English poet and novelist, wrote many years afterwards:

"We who have seen Italia in the throes,
Half risen but to be hurled to the ground, and now,
Like a ripe field of wheat where once drove plough
All bounteous as she is fair, we think of those

Who blew the breath of life into her frame:
Cavour, Mazzini, Garibaldi: three:
Her Brain, her Soul, her Sword; and set her free
From ruinous discords, with one lustrous aim."

I have told you briefly and in bold outline the story of the Italian struggle for freedom. This little account will read to you like any other bit of dead history. But I can tell you how you can make this story live and fill yourself with the joy and anguish of the struggle. At least so I felt when I was a boy at school, long long ago, and I read the story in three books by G. M. Trevelyan—*Garibaldi and the Fight for the Roman Republic*, *Garibaldi and the Thousand*, and *Garibaldi and the Making of Italy*.

At the time of the Italian struggle the English people sympathised with Garibaldi and his red shirts, and many an English poet wrote stirring poetry about the fight. It is strange how the sympathies of the

English often enough go out to struggling peoples provided their own interests are not involved! To Greece, fighting for freedom, they send the poet Byron and others, to Italy they send all good wishes and encouragement; but next door to them in Ireland, and further away in Egypt and India and elsewhere their messengers bring maxim guns and destruction. Many a beautiful poem was written about Italy at the time by Swinburne and Meredith and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Meredith also wrote novels on the subject. I shall give you here a quotation from a poem of Swinburne's *The Halt before Rome* it is called—written while the Italian struggle was going on and meeting with many a check, and many a traitor was serving the alien masters.

“Gifts have your masters for giving,
Gifts hath not Freedom to give;
She without shelter or station,
She beyond limit or bar,
Urges to slumberless speed
Armies that famish, that bleed,
Sowing their lives for her seed,
That their dust may rebuild her a nation,
That their souls may relight her a star.”

THE RISE OF GERMANY

January 31, 1933

In our last letter we saw the building up of one of the great European nations with which we are so familiar to-day. We shall now see the making of another great modern nation—Germany.

In spite of a common language and many other common features, the German people continued to be split up into a large number of states, big and small. For many centuries Austria of the Hapsburgs was the leading German Power. Then Prussia came to the front and there was rivalry for the leadership of the German people between these two Powers. Napoleon humbled both of them. He shook the Germans up so much that nationalism gained strength and helped in his final defeat. Thus both in Italy and Germany Napoleon unconsciously and without wishing it gave an impetus to the spirit of nationalism and ideas of freedom. One of the leading German nationalists of the Napoleonic period was Fichte, a philosopher but also an ardent patriot who did much to rouse up his people.

For half a century after Napoleon the little German States continued. There were many attempts at federation but they did not succeed because both the Austrian and Prussian rulers and governments wanted to be leaders in it. Meanwhile there was a great deal of repression of all liberal elements, and there were revolts in 1830 and 1848 which were suppressed. Some petty reforms were also introduced to soothe the people.

In parts of Germany there were coal fields and iron ore, as in England, and thus conditions were favourable for industrial development. Germany also was famous

for her philosophers and scientists—and soldiers! Factories were built and an industrial working class grew up.

At this stage, about the middle of the century, there rose a man in Prussia who was to dominate for many years not only Germany but European politics. This man was Otto von Bismarck, a junker, that is, a land-owner in Prussia. Born in the year of Waterloo, he served for many years as a diplomatic envoy in various courts. In 1862 he became prime minister of Prussia and immediately he began to make himself felt. Within a week of his becoming prime minister he said in the course of a speech: "The great questions of the time will be decided, not by speeches and resolutions of majorities, but by iron and blood."

Blood and iron! Those words, which became famous, truly represented the policy he pursued with foresight and relentlessness. He hated democracy and treated parliaments and popular assemblies with scant courtesy. He seemed to be a relic from the past, but his ability and determination were such that he made the present bend to his will. He made modern Germany and moulded European history in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Germany of philosophers and scientists retired into the background and the new Germany of blood and iron, of military efficiency, began to dominate the Continent of Europe. A prominent German of his day said that "Bismarck makes Germany great and the Germans small." His policy of making Germany a great Power in Europe and in international affairs pleased the Germans and the glamour of a growing national prestige made them put up with all manner of repression from him.

Bismarck came to power with clear ideas as to what he was to do and a carefully worked out plan. He stuck to this resolutely and met with amazing success. He wanted to make Germany, and, through Germany, Prussia, dominant in Europe. At that time France, under Napoleon III, was considered the most

powerful nation on the Continent. Austria was also a great rival. It is fascinating, as a lesson in the old style of international politics and diplomacy, to see how Bismarck played with the other Powers and then disposed of each of them by turn. The first thing he set out to do was to settle once for all the question of the leadership of the Germans. The old rivalry between Prussia and Austria could not be allowed to continue. The question must be finally decided in favour of Prussia and Austria must realise that she will have to play second fiddle. The rise of Prussia was to take place after the fall of Austria, and then would come the turn of France. (Please remember that when I talk of Prussia, Austria and France I mean their governments. All these governments were more or less autocratic and the parliaments there had little power.)

So Bismarck quietly perfected his military machine. Meanwhile, Napoleon III attacked and defeated Austria. This defeat led to Garibaldi's campaign in South Italy which finally resulted in the freedom of Italy. All this suited Bismarck as it weakened Austria. A national revolt having occurred in Russian Poland Bismarck actually offered his help to the Tsar to shoot down the Poles if necessary. This was a disgraceful offer to make but it served its purpose which was to gain the good will of the Tsar in any future complication in Europe. Then, in alliance with Austria, he defeated Denmark, and soon after turned on Austria, having taken care to have the support of France and Italy. Austria was overwhelmed by Prussia in a very short time in 1866. Having settled the question of German leadership and made it clear that Prussia was the boss, very wisely he treated Austria with generosity so as to leave no bitterness. The way was now clear to the creation of a North German Federation under Prussia's leadership (Austria was not in it). Bismarck became the Federal Chancellor. In these days when some of our political and legal pandits talk and argue for months and years

about federations and constitutions, it is interesting to note that Bismarck dictated the new constitution for the North German Federation in five hours. And this, with a few alterations, continued to be the German constitution for fifty years, till after the World War when the Republic was established in 1918.

Bismarck had accomplished his first great object and Prussia was now the dominant power in Germany. The next step was to establish a dominant European position by humbling France. Quietly and without fuss he prepared for this, trying to bring about German unity, and disarming the suspicions of the other European powers. Even defeated Austria was treated so gently that there was not much ill-will left. England was the historical rival of France and looked with great suspicion on Napoleon III's ambitious schemes. So it was not difficult for Bismarck to have the good-will of England in any struggle against France. When he was quite ready for the war he played his game so cleverly that it was Napoleon III who actually declared war on Prussia in 1870. The Prussian government seemed to Europe the innocent victim of aggressive France. '*A Berlin!*' '*A Berlin!*'* people shouted in Paris, and Napoleon III complacently imagined that he would actually be in Berlin soon at the head of a victorious army. But something very different happened. Bismarck's trained military machine hurled itself on the north-eastern frontier of France and the French army crumpled up before it. Within a few weeks, at Sedan, the Emperor Napoleon III himself and his army were made prisoners by the Germans.

So ended the second Napoleonic Empire of France for a republican government was immediately established in Paris. Napoleon III fell for many reasons, but chiefly because he had become thoroughly unpopular with his people on account of his repressive policy. He

*To Berlin, to Berlin!

tried to divert people's attention by foreign wars, a favourite method of kings and governments in trouble. He did not succeed and war itself put a final seal to his ambition.

In Paris a government of National Defence was formed. They offered peace to Prussia but Bismarck's terms were so humiliating that they decided to fight on although they had practically no army left. There was a long siege of Paris with the German armies sitting at Versailles and all round the city. At last Paris yielded and the new Republic accepted defeat and the hard terms of Bismarck. A huge war indemnity was agreed to be paid and, what hurt most, the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine had to be given up to Germany after they had been a part of France for over two hundred years.

But even before the siege of Paris had ended, Versailles saw the birth of a new empire. In September, 1870, Napoleon III's French Empire had ended in January, 1871, a united Germany, with the Prussian king as Kaiser or emperor, was proclaimed in the splendid hall of Louis XIV in the palace at Versailles. All the princes and representatives of Germany assembled there to pay homage to their new emperor—the Kaiser. The Prussian royal house of Hohenzollern had now become an imperial house and united Germany was one of the Great Powers of the world.

In Versailles there was rejoicing and celebration, but in Paris near by there was sorrow and distress and utter humiliation. The people were staggered by their many disasters and there was no stable or well-established government. A large number of monarchists had been elected to a National Assembly and these people intrigued to get back a king. To remove an obstacle from their path they tried to disarm the National Guard which was believed to be republican. All the democrats and revolutionary elements in the city felt that this meant reaction and repression again. There was a rising and the 'Commune' of Paris was proclaimed in March, 1871. This was a kind of municipality and

it looked back to the great French Revolution for inspiration. But there was something much more in it and it embodied though rather vaguely, the new socialistic ideas that had since arisen. In a sense it was the predecessor of the Soviets in Russia.

But this Paris Commune of 1871 had a brief life. The monarchists and the bourgeoisie, frightened by this rising of the common people, laid siege to that part of Paris which was under the Commune. Close by, at Versailles and elsewhere, the German army looked silently on. As the French soldiers, who had been made prisoners by the Germans and were now released, returned to Paris they took the side of their old officers and fought against the Commune. They marched against the Communards and on a summer day towards the end of May, 1871, they defeated them and shot down thirty thousand men and women in the streets of Paris. Large numbers of Communards who were captured were shot down in cold blood later. So ended the Paris Commune and at the time it stirred Europe greatly. This stir was caused not only by the bloody suppression of it, but also because it was the first socialistic revolt against the existing system. The poor had often risen against the rich but they had not thought of changing the system under which they were poor. The Commune was both a democratic and an economic revolt and is thus a landmark in the development of socialistic thought in Europe. In France the violent suppression of the Commune drove socialistic ideas underground and the recovery was slow.

Although the Commune was put down, France escaped more experiments in royalty. After a while she settled down definitely to republicanism and in January, 1875, the third Republic was proclaimed under a new constitution. This republic has managed to carry on since then and still exists. There are some people in France who talk even now of having kings; but they are very few and France seems to be definitely committed to republicanism. The French Republic is

a bourgeois republic and is controlled by the well-to-do middle classes.

France recovered from the German war of 1870-71 and paid the huge indemnity, but in the heart of her people was anger at the humiliation they had been made to suffer. They are a proud people and have long memories and the idea of revenge—*la Revanche*—obsessed them. Especially they felt the loss of Alsace and Lorraine. Bismarck had been wise in his generosity to Austria after her defeat, but there was no generosity or wisdom in his harsh treatment of France. At the cost of humbling a proud enemy he bought the terrible and ever-remembered enmity of those people. Just after the battle of Sedan even before the war had ended, Karl Marx, the famous socialist, issued a manifesto in which he prophesied that the annexation of Alsace would lead to "mortal enmity between the two countries, to a truce instead of a peace". In this as in many other matters he was a true prophet.

In the beautiful Place de la Concorde in Paris there are many stately statues representing the great cities of France. Among these there is a statue of Strassburg or Strasbourg which is the chief city in Alsace-Lorraine. I remember passing by it often before the great war and always it was covered with flowers, in mourning for the fact that it was no longer part of France. It was a continued reminder to the French people that they had to take 'revenge'. After the German defeat in 1918 Alsace-Lorraine changed hands again and there are no flowers now on the statue of Strasbourg in Paris.

In Germany Bismarck was now the all powerful Imperial Chancellor. The policy of "blood and iron" had succeeded for the time being and Germany accepted it and liberal ideas were at a discount. Bismarck tried to keep power in the hands of the king for he was no believer in democracy. The growth of German industry and the working class brought new problems as this class was gaining in strength and making radical demands. Bismarck dealt with it in two ways—bettering the

workers' conditions and suppressing socialism. He tried to win the workers over, or at any rate to prevent them from becoming extreme, by bribes in the shape of social legislation. Germany thus took the lead in this kind of legislation and laws for old age pensions, insurance and medical aid for workers, and other improvements in workers' conditions, were passed before even England, with her older industry and workers' movement, had done much in this line. This policy had some success but still the workers' organisations grew. They had able leaders: Ferdinand Lassalle, a very brilliant person and said to be the greatest orator of the nineteenth century. He died quite young as the result of a duel. Wilhelm Liebknecht, a brave old fighter and rebel, who was almost shot, but escaped and lived to a good age; his son, Karl, still carrying on the fight for liberty, was murdered a few years ago at the founding of the German Republic in 1918. And Karl Marx, about whom I shall have to tell you something in another letter. But Marx was an exile from Germany for the greater part of his life.

The workers' organisations grew and in 1875 they joined together to form the Socialist Democratic Party. Bismarck could not tolerate this growth of socialism. There was an attempt on the Emperor's life and he made this the excuse for a fierce attack on socialists. In 1878 anti-socialist laws were passed suppressing every kind of socialist activity. There was a kind of martial law so far as socialists were concerned and thousands of persons were expelled from the country or sentenced to imprisonment. Many of those expelled went to America and were the pioneers of socialism there. The Socialist Democratic Party was hard hit but it survived and later grew in strength again. Bismarck's terrorism could not kill it; success proved much more harmful! As it grew in power it became a vast organisation owning a great deal of property and with thousands of paid workers. When a person or organisation gets wealthy he or it ceases to be revolutionary. And this was the

fate which befell this socialist Democratic Party in Germany. But of this I may tell you something later.

Bismarck's skill in diplomacy did not leave him to the end and he played a great game in the international politics of his day. These politics then were, and even now are, a curious and intricate web of intrigue and counter-intrigue and deception and bluff, all in secret and behind the veil. They would not last long if they saw the light of day! It is strange how people put up with this secret and dangerous game which often results in terrible war. Bismarck made an alliance with Austria and Italy, called the Triple Alliance, for now he was beginning to fear the revenge of the French. And so each side went on arming and intriguing and glaring at each other.

In 1888 a young man became the German Kaiser or Emperor Wilhelm II. He fancied himself greatly as a strong man and soon he fell out with Bismarck. In his old age and much to his wrath the Iron Chancellor was dismissed from his office and told to go home. As a sop he was given the title of prince but he retired to his estate in disgust and disillusioned about kings. To a friend he said: "I took up office equipped with a great fund of royalist sentiments and veneration for the king; to my sorrow, I find that this fund is ever more and more depleted! I have seen three kings naked, and the sight was not always a pleasant one!"

The grumpy old man lived for several years more and died in 1898 at the age of 83. Even after his dismissal by the Kaiser and his death, his shadow lay over Germany and his spirit moved his successors. But they were lesser men who came after him. To-day Germany is a Republic, and yet the old Bismarckian spirit is still in evidence.

SOME FAMOUS WRITERS

February 1, 1933

As I was writing to you yesterday about the rise of Germany, it struck me that I had not told you anything about the greatest German of the early nineteenth century. This man was Goethe, a famous writer, the centenary of whose death was celebrated all over Germany a few months ago. And then I thought that I might tell you something about the famous writers of this period in Europe. But this was a dangerous subject for me, dangerous because I would only show my own ignorance. Just to give a list of well-known names would be rather silly, and to say something more would be difficult. I know little enough about English literature, and of the other European literatures my knowledge is confined to a few translations. What then was I to do?

The idea to say something on the subject had taken possession of my mind and I could not rid myself of it. I felt that I should at least point out this direction to you, even though I cannot accompany you far along the way to this enchanted land. For art and literature often give greater insight into a nation's soul than the superficial activities of the multitude. They take us to a region of calm and serene thought, which is not affected by the passions and prejudices of the moment. But to-day the poet and the artist are seldom looked upon as the prophets of tomorrow and they meet with little honour. If some honour comes to them at all it usually comes after they are dead.

So I shall just mention a few names to you, some of which must be already familiar to you, and I shall

only touch upon the early part of the century. This is just to whet your appetite. Remember that the nineteenth century has rich stores of fine writing in many of the European countries.

Goethe really belonged to the eighteenth century for he was born in 1749, but he lived to the ripe old age of eighty-three and thus saw a good third of the next century. He lived through one of the stormiest periods of European history and saw his own country overrun by Napoleon's armies. In his own life he experienced much sorrow, but gradually he gained an inner command over life's difficulties and attained a detachment and calm which brought peace to him. Napoleon first saw him when he was over sixty. As he stood in the doorway, there was something in his face and figure, an untroubled look and a bearing full of dignity, that Napoleon exclaimed: "*Voilà un homme.**" He dabbled in many things and whatever he did, he did with distinction. He was a philosopher, a poet, a dramatist, and a scientist interested in many different sciences; and, besides all this, his practical job was that of a minister in the court of a petty German prince! He is known to us most of all as a writer and his most famous book is *Faust*. His fame spread far during his long life and in his own sphere of literature he came to be regarded by his countrymen almost as a demi-god.

Goethe had a contemporary, somewhat younger than he was, named Schiller, who was also a great poet. Much younger was Heinrich Heine, yet another great and delightful poet in German, who has written very beautiful lyrics. All these three—Goethe, Schiller and Heine—were steeped in the classical culture of ancient Greece.

Germany has long been known as the land of philosophers and I might as well mention one or two names to you, although perhaps they will not interest

*Here is a Man!

you greatly. Only those people who have a passion for the subject need try to read their books for they are very abstruse and difficult. None the less these and other philosophers are interesting and instructive, for they kept alight the torch of thought, and through them one can follow the development of ideas. Immanuel Kant was the great German Philosopher of the eighteenth century, and he lived on to the turn of the century when he was eighty. Hegel is another great name in this line. He followed Kant and is supposed to have influenced greatly Karl Marx, the Father of Communism. So much for the philosophers.

The early years of the nineteenth century produced quite a bunch of poets, especially in England. Russia's best known national poet, Pushkin, also lived then. He died young as the result of a duel. There were several poets in France also but I shall only mention two French names. One is that of Victor Hugo, who was born in 1802 and lived, like Goethe, to the age of eighty-three and, also like Goethe, became a kind of demi-god of literature in his own country. He had a varied career both as a writer and as a politician. He started life as an aggressive royalist and almost a believer in autocracy. Gradually he changed step by step till he became a republican in 1848. Louis Napoleon, when he became president of the short-lived Second Republic, exiled him for his republican views. In 1871 Victor Hugo favoured the Commune of Paris. From the extreme right of conservatism he had moved gradually but surely to the extreme left of socialism. Most people grow conservative and reactionary as they become older. Hugo did the exact opposite.

But we are concerned here with Victor Hugo as a writer. He was a poet, novelist and dramatist and you must be familiar with his name for one of his famous novels—*Les misérables*—has, I am told, been made the subject of a Cinema film.

The second French name I shall mention to you is that of Honoré de Balzac. He was a contemporary of

Victor Hugo's but was very different from him. He was a novelist of tremendous energy and wrote a huge number of novels during a fairly short life. His stories are connected with one another; the same characters often appear in them. His object was to mirror the whole of the French life of his day in his novels and he called the whole series *La Comedie Humaine*. It was a very ambitious idea and although he worked hard and long, he could not complete the enormous task he had set himself.

In England three brilliant young poets stand out in the early years of the nineteenth century. They were contemporaries and they all died young within three years of each other. These three were Keats, Shelley and Byron. Keats had a hard tussle with poverty and discouragement, and when he died in Rome in 1821 at the age of 26 he was little known. And yet he had written some very beautiful poetry. Keats belonged to the middle classes and it is interesting to note that if lack of money was an obstruction in his way, how much more difficult must it be for the poor to become poets and writers. Indeed, the present Cambridge professor of English literature has some pertinent remarks to make about this:

"It is", he says, "certain that, by some fault in our commonwealth, the poor poet has not in these days, nor has had for two hundred years, a dog's chance. Believe me—and I have spent a great part of ten years in watching some three hundred and twenty elementary schools,—we may prate of democracy, but actually, a poor child in England has little more hope than had the son of an Athenian slave to be emancipated into that intellectual freedom of which great writings are born."

I have given this quotation because we are apt to forget that poetry and fine writing and culture generally are all monopolies of the well-to-do classes. Poetry and culture have little place in a poor man's hut; they are not meant for empty stomachs. So our present-day culture becomes a reflection of the well-to-do bourgeois mind. It may change greatly when the worker

takes charge of it in a different social system where he has the opportunities and leisure to indulge in culture. Some such change is being watched with interest in Soviet Russia to-day.

This also makes it clear to us that a great deal of our cultural poverty in India during the last few generations is due to our people's excessive poverty. It is an insult to talk of culture to people who have nothing to eat. This blight of poverty affects even those few who happen to be relatively well-to-do, and so unhappily even these classes in India are to-day singularly uncultured. What a host of evils foreign rule and social backwardness have to answer for! But even in this general poverty and drabness, India can still produce splendid men and magnificent exemplars of culture, like Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore.

I have drifted away from my subject.

Shelley was a most lovable creature. Full of fire from his early youth and the champion of freedom in everything and everywhere. He was expelled from his college at Oxford for writing an essay on *The Necessity of Atheism*. He (and Keats also) went through his brief life as a poet is supposed to do, living in his imagination and in the air and regardless of wordly difficulties. He was drowned near the Italian coast a year after the death of Keats. I need not tell you of his famous poems as you can easily find them out for yourself. But I shall give you one of his shorter poems. It is by no means among his best, but it brings out the awful fate of the poor worker in our present civilization. He is in almost as bad a condition as the old slaves were. It is more than a hundred years since the poem was written and yet it applies to present-day conditions. It is called *The Mask of Anarchy*.

What is Freedom?—ye can tell
That which slavery is, too well—
For its very name has grown
To an echo of your own.

'Tis to work and have such pay
As just keeps life from day to day
In your limbs, as in a cell
For the tyrants use to dwell.
So that ye for them are made
Loom, and plough, and sword, and spade,
With or without your own will bent
To their defence and nourishment.
'Tis to see your children weak
With their mothers pine and peak,
When the winter winds are bleak—
They are dying, whilst I speak.
'Tis to hunger for such diet
As the rich man in his riot
Casts to the fat dogs that lie
Surfeiting beneath his eye.
'Tis to be a slave in soul
And to hold no strong control
Over your own wills, but be
All that others make of ye.
And at length, when ye complain
With a murmur weak and vain,
'Tis to see the tyrant's crew
Ride over our wives and you—
Blood is on the grass like dew.

Byron has also written fine poetry in praise of freedom, but it is national freedom and not economic freedom as in Shelley's poem. He died, as I have told you, in the Greek national war of liberation against Turkey, two years after Shelley. I am rather prejudiced against Byron as a man and yet I have a fellow-feeling for him for did he not go to Harrow School and Trinity College Cambridge—my school and college? Unlike Keats and Shelley fame came to him in his youth and he was lionised by London society only to be dropped later.

There were two other well-known poets about this time, both much longer lived than this youthful trio. Wordsworth, who lived for eighty years from 1770 to 1850, is considered one of the great English poets. He was very fond of nature and much of his poetry is

nature poetry. I am afraid I am not one of his admirers. The other was Coleridge; a few of his poems are very good.

The early nineteenth century also saw three famous novelists. Walter Scott was the eldest of these and his Waverly novels were very popular. I suppose you have read some of them. I remember liking them when I was a boy, but tastes change as one grows up, and I am sure they would bore me now if I read them. Thackeray and Dickens were the two other novelists. Both I think are far superior to Scott. I hope they are both friends of yours. Thackeray was born in Calcutta in 1811 and spent five or six years there. Some of his books have got realistic descriptions of the Indian *Nabobs*, that is the English people in India who having collected a huge fortune and become fat and peppery, returned to England to enjoy themselves.

This is as much as I propose to write about the writers of the early nineteenth century. It is ridiculously little about a big subject. A person who knew the subject could write charmingly about it; he would also no doubt tell you a lot about the music and art of the period. All this requires telling and knowing but they are beyond me and I shall wisely keep to solid ground.

I shall finish up this letter by giving you a poem from Goethe's *Faust*. This is of course a translation from the German:

Alas, alas!
Thou hast smitten the world,
Thou hast laid it low,
Shattered, o'er thrown,
Into nothingness hurled
Crushed by a demi-god's blow!

We bear them away,
The shards of the world,
We sing well-a-day
Over the loveliness gone,
Over the beauty slain.

Build it again,
 Great child of Earth,
Build it again
 With a finer worth,
In thine own bosom build it on high!
 Take up thy life once more:
Run the race again!
 High and clear
Let a lovelier strain
 Ring out than ever before!

DARWIN AND THE TRIUMPH OF SCIENCE

February 3, 1933

From the poets let us go to the scientists. The poets, I am afraid, are now considered rather ineffectual beings; but the scientists are the miracle workers of to-day, and they have influence and honour. This was not so before the nineteenth century. In the earlier centuries a scientist's life was a risky affair in Europe and sometimes ended on the stake! I have told you of how Giordano Bruno was burnt in Rome by the church. A few years later, in the seventeenth century, Galileo came very near the stake because he had stated that the earth went round the sun. He escaped being burnt for heresy because he apologised to the church and withdrew his previous statements. In this way the church in Europe was always coming into conflict with science and trying to suppress new ideas. Organized religion, in Europe or elsewhere, has various dogmas attached to it which its followers are supposed to accept without doubt or questioning. Science has a very different way of looking at things. It takes nothing for granted and has, or ought to have, no dogmas. It seeks to encourage an open mind and tries to reach truth by repeated experiment. This outlook is obviously very different from the religious outlook and it is not surprising that there was frequent conflict between the two.

Experiments of various kinds have, I suppose, been carried on by different peoples in all ages. In ancient India, it is said, that chemistry and surgery were fairly advanced and this could only have been so after a great

deal of experimenting. The old Greeks also experimented to some extent. As for the Chinese, only yesterday I read a most astonishing account, which gave extracts from Chinese writers of 2500 years ago, showing that they knew of the theory of evolution, and of the circulation of the blood through the body, and that Chinese surgeons gave anaesthetics! But we do not know enough about these times to justify any conclusions. If the ancient civilizations had discovered these methods, why did they forget them later? And why did they not make greater progress? Or was it that they did not attach enough importance to this kind of progress? Many interesting questions arise but we have no materials to answer them.

The Arabs were very fond of experimenting, and Europe in the Middle Ages followed them. But all their experimentation was not truly scientific. They were always looking for what was called the "Philosopher's Stone", which was supposed to have the virtue of turning common metals into gold. People spent their lives in complicated chemical experiments to find the secret of such transmutation of metals, alchemy this was called. They also searched diligently for an "elixir of life" or Amrit, which would give immortality. There is no record, outside fairy tales, of any one having ever succeeded in finding this *amrit* or the famous stone. All this was really dabbling in some kind of magic in the hope of gaining wealth and power and long life. It had nothing to do with the spirit of science. Science has no concern with magic and sorcery and the like.

The real scientific method, however, developed gradually in Europe, and among the greatest names in the history of science is that of the Englishman, Isaac Newton, who lived from 1642 to 1727. Newton explained the law of gravitation, that is, of how things fall; and with the help of this, and other laws which had been discovered, he explained the movements of the sun and the planets. Everything, both big and small, seemed to fit in to his theories and he received great

honour.

The spirit of science was gaining on the dogmatic spirit of the church. It could no longer be put down or its votaries sent to the stake. Many scientists patiently worked and experimented and collected facts and knowledge, especially in England and France, and later in Germany and America. The body of scientific knowledge thus grew. The eighteenth century in Europe, you will remember, was the century when rationalism spread among the educated classes. It was the century of Voltaire and Rousseau and many other able Frenchmen who wrote on all manner of subjects and created a ferment in the minds of the people. The great French Revolution was being hatched in the womb of the century. This rationalistic outlook fitted in with the scientific outlook, and both had this in common that they opposed the dogmatic outlook of the church.

The nineteenth century, I have told you, was, among other things, the century of science. The industrial revolution, the mechanical revolution and the amazing changes in the methods of transport, were all due to science. The numerous factories had changed the methods of production; railways and steamships had suddenly narrowed the world; the electric telegraph was an even greater wonder. Wealth poured into England from her far flung empire. Old ideas were naturally much shaken by this, and the hold of religion grew less. Factory life, as compared to an agricultural life on the land, in itself made people think more of economic relations than of religious dogmas.

In the middle of the century, in 1859, a book was published in England which brought the conflict between the dogmatic and the scientific outlook to a head. This book was the *Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin. Darwin is not among the very great scientists; there was nothing very new in what he said. Other geologists and naturalists had been at work before Darwin, and had gathered much material. None the less

Darwin's book was epoch making; it produced a vast impression and helped in changing the social outlook more than any other scientific work. It resulted in a mental earthquake, and made Darwin famous.

Darwin had wandered about a great deal in South America and the Pacific as a naturalist and had collected an enormous amount of material and data. He used this to show how each species of animals had changed and developed by natural selection. Many people had thought till then that every species or kind of animal, including man, had been separately created by God, and had remained apart and unchangeable since then, that is to say that one species could not become another. Darwin showed, by a mass of actual examples, that species did change from one to another, and that this was the normal method of development. These changes took place by natural selection. A slight variation in a species, if it happened to be profitable to it in any way or helped it to survive others, would gradually become a permanent change, as obviously more of this varied species would survive. After a while this varied species would be in the majority and would swamp the others. In this way changes and variations would creep in, one after the other, and after some time there would be an almost new species produced in this way. So in course of time many new species would arise by this process of survival of the fittest by natural selection. This would apply to plants and animals and even man. It is possible, according to this theory, that there might be a common ancestor of all the various plant and animal species we see to-day.

A few years later Darwin published another book—*The Descent of Man*—in which he applied his theory to man. This idea of evolution and of natural selection is accepted by most people now, though not exactly in the way Darwin and his followers put it forward. Indeed, it is quite a common thing for people to apply this principle of selection artificially to the breeding of animals and the cultivation of plants and fruits and

flowers. Many of the prize animals and plants to-day are new species, artificially created. If man can produce such changes and new species in a relatively short time, what could not nature do in this line in the course of hundreds of thousands or millions of years? A visit to a natural history museum, say the South Kensington Museum in London, shows us how plants and animals are continually adapting themselves to nature.

All this seems obvious enough to us now who have got used to this idea. But this was not so obvious seventy years ago. Most people in Europe still believed at the time in the Biblical account of the creation of the world just 4004 years before Christ and of each plant and animal being created separately, and finally man. They believed in the Flood and in Noah's Ark with its pairs of animals, so that no species might become extinct. All this did not fit in with the Darwinian theory. Darwin and the geologists talked of millions of years as the age of the earth and not a paltry 6000 years. So there was a tremendous tussle in the minds of men and women, and many good people did not know what to do. Their old faith told them to believe in one thing and their reason said another. When people believe blindly in dogmas and the dogmas receive a shaking, they feel helpless and miserable and without any solid ground to stand upon. But a shaking which wakes us to reality is good. We could do with such a shaking in India!

So there was a great argument and a great conflict in England and elsewhere in Europe between science and religion. There could be no doubt of the result. The new world of industry and mechanical transport depended on science and science thus could not be discarded. Science won all along the line and "natural selection" and "survival of the fittest" became part of the ordinary jargon of the people, who used the phrases without fully understanding what they meant. Darwin had suggested in his *Descent of Man* that there might

have been a common ancestor of man and certain apes. This could not be proved by several examples showing various stages in the process of development. From this there grew the popular joke about the "missing link". And, curiously enough, the ruling classes twisted Darwin's theory to suit their own convenience, and were firmly convinced that it supplied yet another proof of their superiority. They were the fittest to survive in the battle of life, and so by "natural selection" they had come out on top and were the ruling class! This became the justification for one class dominating over another, or one race ruling over another. It became the final argument of imperialism and the supremacy of the white race! And many people in the west thought that the more domineering they were, the more pitiless and strong, the higher up in the scale of human values they were likely to be. It is not a pleasant philosophy but it explains to some extent the ruthless conduct of western imperialist powers in Asia and Africa. According to this interpretation of Darwin's theory by the imperialists, Chengiz Khan would be the highest cultural type of his period because he subdued Asia and Europe and destroyed a good part of them; or the Huns under Attila would be the ideal people of their age! Some people in the west to-day are prepared to agree to these comparisons and to act accordingly.

Darwin's theories have been criticised subsequently by other scientists, but his general ideas still hold. One of the results of a general acceptance of his theories was to make people believe in the idea of progress, which meant that the world as a whole, or man and society, were marching towards perfection and becoming better and better. This idea of progress was not the result of Darwin's theory alone. The whole trend of scientific discovery and the changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution and afterwards had prepared people's minds for it. Darwin's theory clinched the matter and people began to imagine themselves as

marching proudly from victory to victory to the goal of human perfection, whatever that might be. It is interesting to note that this idea of progress was quite a new one. There seems to have been no such idea in the past in Europe or Asia, or in any of the old civilizations. In Europe, right up to the Industrial Revolution people looked upon the past as the ideal period. The old Greek and Roman classical period was supposed to be finer and more advanced and cultured than subsequent periods. There was progressive deterioration or worsening of the race, so people thought, or at any rate there was no marked change.

In India there is much the same idea of deterioration, of a *Rāma rāj* that is past. Indian mythology measures time in enormous periods, like the geological periods, but always it begins with the great age, *Satya Yuga*, and comes down to the present age of evil, the *Kali Yuga*.

So we see that the idea of human progress is quite a modern notion. Our knowledge of past history, such as it is, makes us believe in this idea. But then our knowledge is still very limited and it may be that with fuller knowledge, our outlook might change. Even to-day there is not quite the same enthusiasm about 'progress' as there was in the second half of the nineteenth century. If progress leads us to destroy each other on a vast scale, as was done in the World War, well then there is something wrong with such progress. Another thing worth remembering is that Darwin's 'survival of the fittest' does not necessarily mean the survival of the best. All these are speculations for the learned. What we have to note is that the old and widespread idea of a static or unchanging, or even deteriorating society was pushed aside by modern science in the nineteenth century, and in its place came the idea of a dynamic and changing society. Also there came the idea of progress. And indeed society did change out of all recognition during this period.

As I have been telling you of Darwin's theory of

the origin of species, it might interest you to know what a Chinaman wrote on the subject 2500 years ago. Tson Tse was his name and he wrote in the sixth century before Christ, about the time of the Buddha. "All organizations are originated from a single species. This single species had undergone many gradual and continuous changes, and then gave rise to all organisms of different forms. Such organisms were not differentiated immediately, but, on the contrary, they acquired their differences through gradual change, generation after generation." This is near enough to Darwin's theory, and it is amazing that the old Chinese biologist should have arrived at a conclusion which it took the world two and a half millennial to re-discover.

As the nineteenth century progressed the rate of change became ever faster. Science produced wonder after wonder and an endless pageant of discovery and invention dazzled people's eyes. Many of these discoveries changed the life of the people greatly, like the telegraph, the telephone, the automobile and finally the aeroplane. Science dared to measure the farthest heavens and also the invisible atom and its still smaller components. It lessened the drudgery of man and life became easier for millions. Because of science there was a tremendous increase in the population of the world and especially of the industrial countries. At the same time science evolved the most thorough-going methods of destruction. But this was not the fault of science. It did its job by ever increasing man's command over nature, but man with all this command over nature did not know how to command himself. And so he misbehaved often enough and wasted the gifts of science. But the triumphant march of science went on and within a hundred and fifty years this changed the world more than all the previous many thousand years had done. Indeed in every direction and in every department of life science has revolutionised the world.

This march of science is continuing even now and

it seems to rush on faster than ever. There is no rest for it. A railway is built. By the time it is ready to function it is already out of date! A machine is bought and fixed up; within a year or two better and more efficient machines of that very kind are being made. And so the mad race goes on, and now in our time electricity is replacing steam, and thus bringing about as great a revolution as the Industrial Revolution of a century and a half ago.

Vast numbers of scientists and experts are continually at work in the numerous highways and byeways of science. The greatest name in their ranks to-day is that of Albert Einstein who has succeeded in modifying to some extent the famous theory of Newton.

So vast has been the recent progress in science and so great the additions and changes in scientific theory, that scientists themselves have been taken aback. They have lost all their old complacency and pride of certainty. They are hesitant now about their conclusions and their prophecies for the future.

But this is a development of the twentieth century and our own day. In the nineteenth century there was full assurance, and science, priding itself on its innumerable successes, imposed itself on the people, and they bowed down to it, as to a god.

THE ADVANCE OF DEMOCRACY

February 10, 1933

In my last letter I tried to give you a glimpse of the progress of science in the nineteenth century. Let us now look at another aspect of this century—the growth of the democratic idea.

You will remember my telling you of the war of ideas in eighteenth century France; of Voltaire, the greatest thinker and writer of his day, and of others in France, who challenged many old notions of religion and society and boldly advanced new theories. Such political thinking was largely confined to France at the time. In Germany, there were the philosophers who interested themselves in more abstruse questions of philosophy. In England, business and trade were increasing and most people were not fond of thinking unless circumstances made them do so. One notable book however came out in England in the second half of the eighteenth century. This was Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. It was not a book on politics as such but on political economy or economics. This subject, like all other subjects at the time, was mixed up with religion and ethics and there was thus a great deal of confusion about it. Adam Smith dealt with it in a scientific way and, disregarding all ethical complications, tried to find natural laws which governed economics. Economics, as you perhaps know, deals with the management of the income and expenditure of the people or a country as a whole, of what they produce and what they consume, and their relations to each other and other countries and peoples. Adam Smith believed that all these rather complicated

operations took place according to fixed natural laws, which he set down in his book. He also believed that full liberty should be given for the development of industry so that these laws might not be interfered with. This was the beginning of the doctrine of 'laissez-faire' about which I have already told you something. Adam Smith's book had nothing to do with the new democratic ideas which were germinating in France at the time. But his attempt at scientific treatment of one of the most important problems which affected men and nations shows that men were going in a new direction, away from the old theological way of looking at everything. Adam Smith is considered the father of the science of economics and he inspired many English economists of the nineteenth century.

The new science of economics was confined to professors and a few well-read men. But meanwhile the new ideas of democracy were spreading, and the American and French Revolutions gave them a tremendous push and advertisement. The fine sounding words and phrases of the American Declaration of Independence and the French Declaration of Rights stirred people to the depth. To the millions who were oppressed and exploited they brought a thrill and a message of deliverance. Both the declarations spoke of liberty and equality and of the right to happiness which everyone has. The proud declaration of these precious rights did not result in the people obtaining them. Even now, a century and a half after these declarations, few can be said to enjoy them. But even the declaration of these principles was extraordinary and life-giving; such a thing had never been done before.

The old idea in Europe as elsewhere, in Christianity as in other religions, was that sin and unhappiness were the common and inevitable lot of man. Religion seemed to give a permanent and even an honoured place to poverty and misery in this world. The promises and rewards of religion were all for some other world; here we were told to bear with our lot with resignation

and not to seek any fundamental change. Charity was encouraged, the giving of crumbs to the poor, but there was no idea of doing away with poverty, or with a system which resulted in poverty. The very ideas of liberty and equality were opposed to the authoritarian outlook of the church and society.

Democracy did not of course say that all men were in fact equal. It could not say this, because it is obvious enough that there are inequalities between different men, physical inequalities which result in some being stronger than others, mental inequalities which are seen in some people being abler or wiser than others, and moral inequalities which make some unselfish and others not so. It is quite possible that many of these inequalities are due to different kinds of upbringing and education or want of education. Of two boys or girls who are similar in ability, give one a good education and the other no education, and after some years there will be a vast difference between the two. Or give one of them healthy food and the other bad and insufficient food, and the former will grow properly while the latter will be weak and ailing and under-developed. So one's upbringing and surroundings and training and education make a vast deal of difference, and it may be that if we could give the same training and opportunities to everybody there would be far less inequality than there is now. This is indeed very likely. But so far as democracy is concerned, it admitted that men were as a matter of fact unequal and yet it stated that each one of them should be treated as having an equal political and social value. If we accept this democratic theory in its entirety, we are led to all manner of revolutionary conclusions. We need not go into these at this stage, but one obvious consequence of the theory was that each person should have a vote for the election of a representative to the governing assembly or parliament. The vote was the symbol of political power and it was assumed that if everyone had a vote, each such person would have an equal share in political

power. Therefore one of the principal demands of democracy, right through the nineteenth century, was the extension of the franchise, that is the right to vote. Adult suffrage or franchise was when every adult or grown-up person had the vote. For a long time women were not allowed to vote and there was not very long ago a tremendous agitation by them, especially in Britain. In most advanced countries there is adult suffrage for both men and women now.

But, curiously enough, when most people had got the vote they found that it did not make very much difference to them. In spite of having the vote they had no power, or very little power, in the State. A vote is of little use to a hungry person. The people with real power were those who could take advantage of his hunger and make him work or do anything else that they wanted to their own advantage. Thus political power, which the vote was supposed to give, was seen to be a shadow with no substance without economic power, and the brave dreams of the early democrats that equality would follow from the vote, came to nothing.

This was, however, a much later development. In the early days—the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century—there was great enthusiasm among the democrats. Democracy was going to make everybody a free and equal citizen and the government of the state would work for the happiness of everybody! There was a great reaction against the autocracy of the kings and governments of the eighteenth century and the way they had abused their absolute power. This led people to proclaim the rights of individuals in their declarations. Probably these statements of the rights of individuals in the American and French declarations erred somewhat on the other side. In a complex society it is not an easy matter to separate individuals and give them perfect freedom. The interests of such an individual and of society may and do clash. However this may be,

democracy stood for a great deal of individual freedom.

England, which was backward in political ideas in the eighteenth century, was naturally shaken up by the American and French Revolutions. The first reaction was one of fear against the new democratic ideas and the possibility of a social revolution at home. The ruling classes became even more conservative and reactionary. But still the new ideas spread among the intellectuals. Thomas Paine was an interesting Englishman of this period. He was in America at the time of the War of Independence and helped the Americans. He seems to have been partly responsible for converting the Americans to the idea of complete independence. On his return to England he wrote a book, *The Rights of Man*, in defence of the French Revolution which had just begun. In this book he attacked monarchy and pleaded for democracy. The British government outlawed him because of this and he had to fly to France. In Paris he soon became a member of the National Convention, but in 1793 he was put in prison by the Jacobins because he had opposed the execution of Louis XVI. In the Paris jail he wrote another book called *The Age of Reason* in which he criticised the religious outlook. Paine being out of reach of the English courts (he was discharged from the Paris prison after the death of Robespierre) his English publisher was sentenced to imprisonment for issuing this book. Such a book was considered dangerous to society as religion was supposed to be necessary to keep the poor in their place. Several publishers of Paine's book, including women, were sent to prison. It is interesting to find that Shelley, the poet, wrote a letter of protest to the judge.

In Europe the French Revolution was the parent of the democratic ideas that spread throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. Indeed the very ideas of the Revolution persisted although conditions were rapidly changing. These democratic ideas were the intellectual reaction against kings and autocracy. They

were based on conditions prior to industrialisation. But the new industry—steam and big machinery—were upsetting the old order completely. Yet, strange to say, the radicals and democrats of the early nineteenth century ignored these changes and went on talking in the fine phrases of the Revolution and the Declaration of the Rights of Man. To them perhaps these changes were purely material and did not affect the high spiritual and moral and political demands of democracy. But material things have a way of refusing to be ignored! It is very interesting to find how extraordinarily difficult it is for people to give up old ideas and accept new ones. They will shut their eyes and their minds and refuse to see; they will fight to hold on to the old even when it harms them. They will do almost anything, but accept the new ideas and adapt themselves to new conditions. The power of conservatism is prodigious. Even the radicals, who imagine themselves very advanced, often stick to old and exploded ideas and shut their eyes to changing conditions. It is no wonder that progress is slow, and often there is a great lag between actual conditions and people's ideas—resulting in revolutionary situation.

Democracy was thus for many decades the carrying on of the traditions and ideas of the French Revolution. This failure to adapt itself to the new conditions led to the weakening of democracy towards the end of the century, and later in the twentieth century, to its repudiation by many people. In India to-day many of our advanced politicians still talk in terms of the French Revolution and the Rights of Man, not appreciating that much has happened since then.

The early democrats naturally took to rationalism. Their demand for freedom of thought and speech could hardly be reconciled with dogmatic religion and theology. Thus democracy joined with science to weaken the hold of theological dogmas. People began to dare to examine the Bible, as if it was an ordinary book and not something that must be accepted blindly

and without questioning. This criticism of the Bible was called the 'higher criticism'. The critics came to the conclusion that the Bible was a collection of documents written by different persons in different ages. They also were of opinion that Jesus had no intention of founding a religion. Many of the old beliefs were shaken by this criticism.

As the old religious foundations were being weakened by science and democratic ideas, attempts were made to put up something in place of the old religion. One of these attempts was by a French Philosopher, Auguste Comte, who lived from 1798 to 1857. Comte felt that the old theology and dogmatic religions were out of date, but he was convinced that some kind of religion was a social necessity. He therefore proposed a "religion of humanity" and called it "Positivism". This was to be based on love, order and progress. There was nothing supernatural about it; it was based on science. At its back, as indeed at the back of nearly all current ideas of the nineteenth century, was the idea of the progress of the human race. Comte's religion remained the belief of a few intellectuals only but his general influence on European thought was great. He begins, practically, the study of the science of sociology, which deals with human society and culture.

A contemporary of Comte's, but surviving him by many years, was the English philosopher and economist John Stuart Mill (1806—1873). Mill was influenced by Comte's teaching as well as by socialistic ideas. He tried to give a new direction to the English school of political economy, which had grown up round the teachings of Adam Smith, and brought some socialistic principles into economic thought. But he is best known as the chief 'utilitarian'. 'Utilitarianism' was a new theory, started a little earlier in England, and brought into greater prominence by J. S. Mill. As its name suggests, its guiding philosophy was utility or usefulness. "The greatest happiness of the greatest

number" was the fundamental principle of the utilitarians. This was the only test of right and wrong. Actions were said to be right in proportion as they tended to promote happiness, and wrong in so far as they tended to promote the reverse of happiness. Society and government were to be organised with this point of view—the promotion of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. This view-point was not quite the same as the earlier democratic doctrine of equal rights for everybody. The greatest happiness of the greatest number might conceivably require the sacrifice or the unhappiness of a smaller number. I am merely pointing this difference out to you but we need not discuss it here. Democracy thus came to mean the rights of the majority.

John Stuart Mill was a strong advocate of the democratic idea of liberty for the individual. He wrote a little book, *On liberty*, which became famous. I shall give you an extract from this book in favour of freedom of speech and the free expression of opinion.

"But the peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race; posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth; if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error. We can never be sure that the opinion we are endeavouring to stifle is a false opinion; and if we were sure, stifling it would be an evil still."

Such an attitude could not be reconciled with that of dogmatic religion or despotism. It was the attitude of a philosopher, a seeker after truth.

I have given you just a few names of important thinkers in Western Europe in the nineteenth century to show the way ideas were developing and to serve as landmarks in the world of thought. But the influence of these people, and the early democrats generally, was

more or less confined to the intellectual classes. To a little extent it percolated through the intellectuals to the others. Although the direct influence on the masses was little, the indirect influence of this democratic ideology was great. Even the direct influence in some matters, such as the demand of the vote, was great.

As the nineteenth century grew older other movements and ideas developed—the working class movement and socialism. These had their influence on current democratic notions and were themselves affected by them. Some people looked upon socialism as an alternative to democracy; others considered it as a necessary part of it. We have seen that the democrats were full of notions of liberty and equality and every one's equal right of happiness. But they saw soon enough that happiness did not come by merely making it a fundamental right. Apart from other things, a certain measure of physical well-being was necessary. A person who was starving was not likely to be happy. This led them to think that happiness depended on a better distribution of wealth among the people. This leads to socialism and that must wait till our next letter.

In the first half of the nineteenth century democracy and nationalism joined hands wherever subject nations or peoples were fighting for freedom. Mazzini of Italy was typical of this kind of democratic patriotism. Later in the century nationalism gradually lost this democratic character and became more aggressive and authoritarian. The state became the god which had to be worshipped by everyone.

English businessmen were the leaders of the new industry. They were not much interested in high democratic principles and the people's right to liberty. But they discovered that greater liberty for the people was good for business. It raised the standard of the workers, and gave them an illusion of possessing some freedom, and made them more efficient at their work. Popular education was also required for industrial efficiency. Businessmen and industrialists appreciating

the expediency of all this piously agreed to confer these favours on the people. In the second half of the century education of a kind spread rapidly among the masses in England and Western Europe.

THE COMING OF SOCIALISM

February 13, 1933

I have written to you about the advance of democracy; but remember that it was a hard fought advance. People who have interests in an existing order do not want change and resist it with all their might. And yet progress or any betterment means such change, an institution or a method of government has to give place to a better one. Those who desire such progress must necessarily attack the old institution or the old custom, and thus their path leads to constant repudiation of existing conditions and conflict with those who profit by them. The ruling classes in Western Europe resisted all advance step by step. In England they gave in only when a refusal to do so might have resulted in a violent revolution. Another reason for them to advance was, as I have mentioned already, a feeling among the new business people that some democracy was expedient and good for business.

But again I shall remind you that these democratic ideas were, during the first half of the nineteenth century, largely confined to the intellectuals. The common people had been powerfully affected by the growth of industrialism and driven from the land to the factories. An industrial working class was growing, huddled up in ugly and insanitary factory towns, usually near the coal fields. These workers were changing rapidly and developing a new mentality. They were very different from the peasants and artisans who had flocked to the factories, urged by starvation. As England had taken the lead in settling up these factories, England also was the first country to develop this

industrial working class. The conditions in the factories were appalling, the workers' houses or huts were even worse. There was great misery among them. Little children and women worked incredibly long hours. And yet all attempts at improving these factories and houses by legislation were stoutly opposed by the owners. Was not this a shameful interference, it was said, with the rights of property? Even the compulsory sanitation of private houses was opposed on this ground. We can see something very like this mentality in India to-day, not only among factory owners and land-owners but also among social and religious reactionaries who are constantly putting up the barrier of religion and custom to prevent reform.

The poor English workers were dying from slow starvation and overwork. After the Napoleonic wars the country was exhausted and there was an economic depression, the workers suffering most by this. (Something of this kind on a world scale is with us now as a legacy of the World War of 1914—18). The workers naturally wanted to form associations to protect themselves and to fight for better conditions. In the old days there had been guilds of artisans and skilled workers, but these were quite different. Still the memory of these guilds must have been an inducement to the factory workers to form associations of their own. But they were prevented from doing so. The British ruling classes were so frightened by the French Revolution that they made laws—Combination Acts they were called—to prevent the poor workers from even meeting together to discuss their own grievances! 'Law and order', then in England as now in India, has always performed the very useful function of serving the ends and the pockets of the handful of those in authority.

But laws to prevent them from meeting did not better the conditions of the workers. They simply exasperated them and made them desperate. They formed secret associations taking great oaths binding each other to privacy and meeting at dead of night in

out-of-the-way places. When they were betrayed or found out there were conspiracy cases and terrible punishments. Sometimes they destroyed the machines in their anger and set fire to the factories and even killed some of their masters. At last in 1825 the restrictions on workers' associations were partly removed and trade unions began to be formed. These unions were formed by the better paid skilled workers. The large majority of the unskilled workers remained unorganised for a long time. The workers' movement thus took the shape of trade unions formed for the purpose of bettering the conditions of the workers by means of collective bargaining. The only real weapon that the workers had was the right to strike, that is stop work and thus bring the factory or wherever they worked to a standstill. This was no doubt a great weapon but their employers had an even more powerful weapon, the ability to starve them into submission. So the struggle of the working class went on with great sacrifices on the part of the workers and slow gains. They had no direct influence on Parliament as they did not have the vote even. The great Reform Bill of 1832, about which there was so much shouting, only gave the vote to the well-to-do middle classes. Not only the workers but the lower middle classes had still no vote.

Meanwhile there arose a man among the factory owners of Manchester who was a humanitarian and who was pained at the shocking conditions of the workers. This man was Robert Owen. He introduced many reforms in his own factories and improved the condition of his workers. He carried on an agitation among his own class of employers and tried to convert them by argument to a better treatment of labour. Partly because of him, the British Parliament passed the first law to protect the workers against the greed and selfishness of the employers. This was the Factory Act of 1819. This Act laid down that little children of nine should not be made to work more than twelve hours a day! This provision itself will give you some

idea of the terrible conditions to which the workers had to submit.

It was Robert Owen, it is said, who first used the word 'socialism' somewhere about 1830. Of course the idea of a levelling up between the rich and the poor, and a more or less equal distribution of property, was not a new one. Many people had advocated it in the past. In the early communities there had been a kind of communism even, the whole community or village holding land and other property in common. This is called primitive communism and is to be found in many countries, including India. But the new socialism was something much more than a vague desire to equalize people. It was more definite and, to begin with, it was meant to apply to the new factory system of production. It was thus a child of the industrial system. Owen's idea was to have workers' co-operative societies, and that workers should have a share in the factories. He established model factories and *āshrams* in England and America with more or less success. But he failed to convert his brother employers or the government. His influence during his time however was great and he gave currency to a word, socialism, which has since captivated millions.

All this time capitalist industry was growing and as it recorded success after success, the problem of the working class grew with it. Capitalism resulted in more and more production and because of this the population grew with enormous speed as more people could be supported and fed now. Huge businesses were built up with intricate co-operation between their different parts, and at the same time the competition of little businesses was crushed out. Wealth was poured into England but much of this went to start new factories or railways or other such concerns. The workers tried to get better conditions by strikes, which usually failed miserably, and then joined the Chartist movement of the forties. This Chartist movement, I have told you in a previous letter, collapsed in the

year of revolution, 1848.

The successes of capitalism dazzled people but still there were some radicals or people with advanced views or humanitarians, who were not happy at its cut-throat competition and the suffering it caused the workers in spite of the country's growing wealth. In England and Germany and France these people considered various alternatives to it. Various answers were suggested and they are all grouped together under the name of Socialism or Collectivism or social democracy, each of these words vaguely meaning the same thing. There was general agreement among these reformers that the trouble lay in the private ownership and control of industry. If instead of this the state could own and control this, or at any rate the principal means of production like the land and the chief industries, then there would be no danger of the workers being exploited. So, rather vaguely, people sought an alternative to the capitalist system. But the capitalist system had no intention of collapsing. It was going from strength to strength.

These socialistic ideas were started by intellectuals and, in the case of Robert Owen, by a factory owner. The workers' trade union movement developed on different lines for a while, merely seeking higher wages and better conditions. But it was naturally influenced by these ideas, and in its turn it influenced greatly the development of socialism. In each of the three leading industrial countries in Europe—England, France and Germany—socialism developed somewhat differently in accordance with the strength and character of the working class in each country. On the whole English socialism was conservative and believed in evolutionary and slow progress methods; continental socialism was more radical and revolutionary. In America conditions were very different because of the vastness of the country and the demand for labour, and so no strong working class movement grew up for a long time.

From the middle of the century onwards, for a generation, British industry dominated the world and

wealth poured in; both from profits of industry and the exploitation of India and other dependencies. A part of this great wealth managed to reach even the workers, and their standards of living arose to a height which they had never known before. Prosperity and revolution have little in common, and the old revolutionary spirit of the British workers disappeared. Even the British brand of socialism became the most moderate of all. Fabianism, this was called, from an old Roman general who refused to give direct battle to the enemy but gradually wore him out. In 1867 the British franchise was still further extended and some of the city workers also got the vote. The trade unions were so well-behaved and prosperous that the labour vote used to go to the British Liberal Party. Karl Marx, writing of this time, says: "It is an honour, rather than the opposite, not to be an English labour leader, for the majority of these leaders are all sold to the liberals." This was written over fifty years ago, but even now the English labour leaders have an unsavoury reputation of forgetting the men who made them great and proving renegades to their old party and cause. With this difference they go a step further and join the conservatives to-day and not the liberals.

While England was getting fat and complacent with prosperity, on the continent of Europe a new creed was finding enthusiastic and ardent support. This was anarchism, a word which seems to terrify many people who know nothing about it. Anarchism meant a society with, as far as possible, no central government and with a great deal of individual freedom. The anarchist ideal was extraordinarily high: "Faith in the ideal of a commonwealth based on altruism, solidarity, and voluntary respect for the other fellow's rights". There was to be no force or compulsion on the part of the State. "That government is best which governs not at all; and when men are prepared for it that will be the kind of government which they will have," said an American, Thoreau.

This seems a very fine ideal—perfect freedom for everybody, each person respecting the other, unselfishness all round, willing co-operation—but the present day world with all its selfishness and violence is far removed from it. 'The anarchists' desire for no central government or a minimum of government must have arisen as a reaction from the autocracy and despotism under which people had suffered for so long. Governments had crushed them and tyrannised over them, therefore let there be no governments? The anarchists also felt that under some forms of socialism, the State, being master of all the means of production, might itself become despotic. The anarchists were therefore socialists of a kind laying great stress on local and individual freedom. Many of the socialists on the other hand were prepared to agree to the anarchist creed as a distant ideal but were of opinion that for some time it would be necessary to have a centralized and strong state government under socialism. Thus although there was a great deal of difference between socialism and anarchism, there were many shades of each gradually approaching and overlapping each other.

Modern industry gave rise to an organised working class. Anarchism by its very nature could not be a well organised movement. Anarchistic ideas therefore had little chance of spreading in industrialized countries where trade unions and the like were growing up. England thus had no appreciable number of anarchists, nor had Germany. But Southern and Eastern Europe which were backward in industrialism were more fertile ground for these ideas. As modern industry spread to the south and east anarchism became weaker and weaker. To-day it is practically a dead creed, but even now it is represented to some extent in a backward and non-industrialized country like Spain.

Anarchism as an ideal may have been very fine, but it gave shelter not only to excitable and dissatisfied people but also to selfish individuals who tried to seek profit for themselves under the cloak of the ideal. And

it led to a type of violence which has now become associated with the word in every one's mind and which has brought much discredit on it. Unable to do anything on a big scale to change society as they wanted to some anarchists decided to do propaganda in a novel way. This was the 'propaganda by the deed', the influence of courageous example, brave deeds to resist tyranny and sacrifice one's own life. There were risings in various places undertaken in this spirit. Those who took part in them expected no success at the time. Willingly they risked their lives to do this novel kind of propaganda for their cause. Of course these risings were put down and then individual anarchists began to resort to terrorism, the throwing of the bomb, the shooting of kings and high officials. This foolish violence was obviously a sign of growing weakness and despair. Gradually, towards the end of the nineteenth century, anarchism faded away as a movement. The throwing of bombs and the 'propaganda by the deed' was not approved of by many of the leading anarchists, who repudiated it.

I shall give you some well-known names of anarchists. It is interesting to note that most of these anarchist leaders were extraordinarily gentle, idealistic and likeable in their private lives. The earliest of the anarchist leaders was a Frenchman, Pierre Proudhon who lived from 1809 to 1865. Slightly younger than him was a Russian noble Michel Bakunin, who was a popular leader of European labour, especially in the south. He came into conflict with Marx, who drove him and his followers out of the international union he had formed. A third name, which brings us almost to our day, is that of Peter Kropotkin, another Russian and a prince! He has written some very interesting books on anarchism and other subjects. The fourth and the last name I shall give you is that of an Italian, Enrico Malatesta, over eighty years old now and still living, the last relic of the great anarchists of the nineteenth century.

There is a fine story about Malatesta which I must tell you. He was being prosecuted in a court of law in Italy. The government prosecuting lawyer argued that Malatesta's influence among the workers of the area was very great and that it had entirely changed their character. It was putting an end to criminality and crimes were getting rare. If all crime stopped what would the courts do? So Malatesta ought to be sent to gaol! Malatesta was in fact sent to gaol for six months.

Anarchism has unfortunately been identified too much with violence and people have forgotten that it is a philosophy and an ideal which has appealed to many fine men. As an ideal it is still very far off from our present very imperfect world, and our modern civilization is much too complicated for its simple remedies.

KARL MARX AND THE GROWTH OF WORKERS' ORGANIZATIONS

February 14, 1933

About the middle of the nineteenth century there appeared in the world of European labour and socialism a new and arresting personality. This man was Karl Marx, whose name has already appeared in these letters. He was a German Jew, born in 1818, who became a student of law and history and philosophy. He came into conflict with the German authorities because of a newspaper he brought out and went to Paris. In Paris he came into touch with new people and read the new books on socialism and anarchism, and he became a convert to the socialistic idea. Here also in Paris he met another German, Friedrich Engels, who had settled in England and had become a rich factory owner in the growing cotton industry. Engels was also unhappy about and dissatisfied with existing social conditions and his mind was seeking remedies for the poverty and exploitation he saw around him. Robert Owen's ideas and attempts at reform appealed to him and he became an Owenite, as Owen's followers were called. The visit to Paris which led to the first meeting with Karl Marx changed him also. Marx and Engels henceforward became close friends and colleagues, holding the same views, and working whole-heartedly together for the same cause. They were about the same age. So close was their co-operation that most of the books that they issued were joint books.

The French Government of the day—it was the time of Louis Philippe—expelled Marx from Paris. He went to London and there he lived for many years,

busying himself in the books of the British museum. He worked hard and perfected his theories and wrote about them. And yet he was by no means a mere professor or philosopher spinning theories and cut off from ordinary affairs. Whilst he developed and clarified the rather vague ideology of the socialist movement, and placed definite and clear-cut ideas and objectives before it, he also took an active and leading part in the organization of the movement and of the workers. The events that took place in 1848, the year of revolution in Europe, naturally moved him greatly. In that very year, he and Engels jointly issued a manifesto which has become very famous. This was the *Communist Manifesto*, in which they discussed the ideas which lay behind the great French Revolution as well as the subsequent revolts of 1830 and 1848 and pointed out how insufficient and inconsistent they were with actual conditions. They criticised the then prevailing democratic cries of liberty, equality and fraternity and pointed out that they meant little to the people and merely gave a pious covering to the bourgeois state. They then briefly developed their own theory of socialism, about which I shall tell you something later, and ended the manifesto by an appeal to all workers: "Workers of the World, unite. You have nothing to lose but your chains, and have a world to win!"

This appeal was a call to action. Marx followed it up by ceaseless propaganda in newspapers and pamphlets and by efforts to bring the workers' organizations together. He seems to have felt that a great crisis was coming in Europe and he wanted the workers to be ready for it so that they might take full advantage of it. According to his socialistic theory the crisis was indeed bound to occur under the capitalistic system. Writing in a New York newspaper in 1854 Marx said: "Yet, we must not forget that a sixth power exists in Europe, maintaining at certain moments its domination over all five so-called 'great powers', and causing them all to tremble. This power is revolution. After having

long dwelt in quiet retirement, it is now again summoned to the field of battle by crises and starvation. . . . There is needed only a signal, and the sixth and greatest European power will step forth in shining armour, sword in hand, like Minerva from the brow of the Olympian. The impending European war will give the signal."

Marx did not prove a correct prophet about the impending revolution in Europe. It took more than sixty years, after he wrote this, and a World War to bring about the revolution in one part of Europe. An attempt in 1871, the Paris Commune, was, as we have seen, mercilessly crushed.

In 1864 Marx succeeded in gathering a motley assembly in London. There were many groups calling themselves, rather vaguely, socialists. On the one side there were democrats and patriots from several European countries under foreign rule whose belief in socialism was in something very distant and who were immediately more interested in national independence; on the other there were the anarchists out for immediate battle. Besides Marx the outstanding personality was that of Bakunin, the anarchist leader, who had managed to escape from Siberia three years before after many years of imprisonment. Bakunin's followers came chiefly from South Europe, the Latin countries like Italy and Spain, which were industrially backward and undeveloped. They were unemployed intellectuals and other odd revolutionary elements who found no place in the existing social order. Marx's followers came from the industrial countries, especially Germany, where the workers' conditions were better. Marx thus represented the growing and organized and relatively well-to-do working class, Bakunin the poorer unorganized workers and intellectuals and malcontents. Marx was for patient organization and education of the workers in his socialistic theories till the hour came for action, which he expected soon enough; Bakunin and his followers were for immediate action. On the whole Marx won. An "International Working Men's Association" was

established. This was the first of the Workers' "Internationals", as they were called.

Three years later, in 1867, Marx's great book, *Das Kapital* or Capital, was published in German. This was the product of his long years of labour in London, and in this he analysed and criticised existing theories of economics and explained at length his own socialistic theory. It was a purely scientific work. He dealt with the development of history and economics in a matter of fact way, dispassionately and scientifically, avoiding all vagueness and idealism. He discussed especially the growth of the industrial civilization of the big machine, and he drew certain far-reaching conclusions about evolution and history and the conflict of classes in human society. This new clear-cut and cogently argued socialism of Marx was therefore called "scientific socialism" as opposed to the vague "utopian" or "idealistic" socialism which had so far prevailed. Marx's *Capital* is not an easy book to read; indeed it is about as far removed from light reading as one can imagine. But none the less it is of the select company of those few books which have affected the way of thinking of large numbers of people, changed their whole ideology, and thus influenced human development.

In 1871 came the tragedy of the Paris Commune, perhaps the first conscious socialistic revolt. This frightened European governments and made them harsher to the Workers' movement. The next year there was a meeting of the Workers' "International", founded by Marx, and Marx succeeded in getting the headquarters of this sent across the Atlantic to New York. Marx did this apparently to get rid of the anarchist followers of Bakunin, and also perhaps because he thought that it would have a safer lodging there than under the European governments which were angry after the Paris Commune. But it was not possible for the International to exist so far away from all its nerve centres. All its strength lay in Europe and even in

Europe the Workers' movement was having a hard time. So the First International gradually expired.

Marxism or Marxian socialism spread among European socialists, especially in Germany and Austria, where it was generally known as "social democracy". England, however, did not take to it kindly. It was too prosperous at the time for any advanced social creed. The British brand of socialism was represented by the Fabian Society with a very mild programme of distant change. The Fabians had nothing to do with the workers. They were advanced liberal intellectuals. George Bernard Shaw was one of the early Fabians. Their policy may be gathered from the famous phrase of another noted Fabian, Sidney Webb (who has now turned a Lord): "the inevitability of gradualness."

In France it took a dozen years' slow recovery after the Commune for socialism to become an active force again. But it took a new form here, a cross between anarchism and socialism. This was called "syndicalism" from the French *syndicat*, a working men's organization or trade union. The socialistic theory was that the state, representing society as a whole, should own and control the means of production, that is land and factories, etc. There was some difference of opinion as to how far this socialization should go. There are obviously many personal things like tools and domestic machines which it might be absurd to socialize. But socialists were agreed that anything which could be used for making private profit out of other people's work should be socialized, that is made the property of the state. Syndicalists, like anarchists, did not like the state very much, and tried to limit its power. They wanted each industry to be controlled by the workers in that industry, by its "syndicat." (Workers, you must always remember, does not mean simply hand labourers but both manual and mental workers). The idea was that the various syndicates would elect representatives to a general council which would look after the affairs of the whole country, would be a kind of parliament for

general affairs, without the power to interfere with the inner arrangements of the industry. To bring this state of affairs about syndicalists advocated the general strike, that is a simultaneous *hartal* or strike of all industries, transport, etc., to bring the life of the country to a standstill and thus gain their objective. The Marxists did not approve of syndicalism at all but, curiously enough, the syndicalists considered Marx (this was after his death) as one of themselves.

Karl Marx died in 1883 just fifty years ago. By that time powerful trade unions had grown up in England and Germany and other industrial countries. British industry had seen its best days and was declining in face of the growing competition of Germany and America. America of course had great natural advantages which helped in rapid industrial growth. Germany was a curious mixture of political autocracy (tempered by a weak and powerless parliament) and industrial advance. The German government under Bismarck and even later helped industry in many ways and tried to win over the working class by social reform measures which bettered their conditions. In the same way the English Liberals also passed some measures of social reform, lessening hours of work and improving the workers' lot to some extent. So long as prosperity lasted this method worked and the English workers remained moderate and subdued and faithfully voted for the Liberals. But in the eighties, the competition of other countries brought about an end of the long prosperous period and a trade depression set in in England and the wages of workers fell. So again there was an awakening of the working class and a revolutionary spirit was in the air. Many people in England began to look to Marxism.

In 1889 another attempt was made to form a Workers' International. Many trade unions and labour parties were strong and wealthy now, with crowds of paid officials. They were much more respectable than in the days of Marx and Bakunin. This International

formed in 1889 (I think it was called the "Labour and Socialist International") is called the "Second International". It lasted for a quarter of a century, till the Great War came to test it and found it wanting. This International had many people in its ranks who later took high office in their countries. They seemed to use labour to lift them up and give them a push and then they left it to shift for itself. They became prime ministers and presidents and the like, they succeeded in life; but the millions who had helped them on and had faith in them, were deserted and left where they were. These leaders, even those who swore by the name of Marx or were fiery syndicalists, went into Parliaments, or became well paid trade union chiefs, and it became more and more difficult for them to risk their comfortable positions in rash undertakings. So they quietened down and even when the masses of the workers, forced by desperation, became revolutionary and demanded action, they tried to keep them down. Social Democrats of Germany became (after the War) president and chancellor of the Republic; in France Briand, fiery syndicalist preaching the General Strike became a prime minister eleven times and crushed a strike of his old comrades; in England Ramsay MacDonald is now prime minister, although his own labour Party which made him and the British Trade Unions, moderate as they are, will have none of him; so also in Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Austria. Western Europe to-day is full of dictators and people in authority who were socialists in their earlier days but, as they aged, they mellowed down and forgot their old enthusiasm for the cause, and sometimes even turned against their old time colleagues. Mussolini, the Duce of Italy, is an old socialist; so also is Pilsudski, the dictator of Poland.

The Labour movement and almost every national movement for independence has often suffered by such defections of its leaders and prominent workers. They grow tired after a while, weary of non-success, and the empty crown of a martyr does not appeal for long.

They quicken down and the fire of their enthusiasm takes a duller hue. Some, who are more ambitious or more unscrupulous, walk across to the other side and make individual truce with those they had so far opposed and combated. It is easy enough to reconcile one's conscience to any step that one desires to take. The movement suffers and has a little set-back by this defection, and because those who fight labour and suppress nationalities know this well, they try to win over individuals to their side by all manner of inducements and fair words. But individual preferment or fair words bring no relief to the mass of the workers or to a suppressed nation striving to be free. So despite desertions and set-backs the struggle inevitably goes on to its appointed end.

The second International, started in 1889, grew in numbers and respectability. A few years later they turned out the anarchists under Malatesta on the ground that they refused to take advantage of the vote for parliaments. The socialists of the International showed that they preferred parliaments to association with their old comrades in a common struggle. Brave declarations were made by them as to the duty of socialists in the case of war in Europe. Socialists recognised no national boundaries so far as their work was concerned. They were not nationalists in the ordinary sense of the word. They said they would oppose war. But when war did come in 1914 the whole structure of the second International broke up and socialists and labour parties in each country, and even anarchists like Krupatkin, became as rabid nationalists and haters of the other country as anyone else. Only a minority resisted and as a consequence were made to suffer greatly in many ways, including long terms of imprisonment.

After the war was over Lenin started a new Workers' International in Moscow in 1919. This was a purely communist organisation and only declared communists could join it. This exists now and is called the Third International. The relics of the old Second

International also gradually collected themselves together after the war. A few allied themselves to the new Moscow Third International, but most of them disliked Moscow and its creed intensely and refused to come anywhere near it. They revived the Second International. This also exists now. So that at present there are two International Workers' organizations, briefly known as the Second and Third International. Strangely enough they both swear by Marxism, but each has its own interpretation, and yet they hate each other more even than they do their common enemy, capitalism.

These Internationals do not include all the trade unions and working men's organizations in the world. Many of these do not belong to either. The American trade unions stand apart because most of them are very conservative. The Indian trade unions also do not belong to either International because they cannot make up their minds.

Perhaps you know the song *Internationale*. This is the accepted workers' and socialists' song all the world over.

MARXISM

February 16, 1933

I had intended telling you something in my last letter of the ideas of Marx which created so much commotion in the world of European socialism. But that letter had grown long enough and I had to hold this over. It is not an easy subject for me to write about as I am no expert in it, and, as it happens, even the experts and the pandits differ. I shall only give you some leading characteristics of Marxism and avoid the difficult parts of it. This will give you rather a patchy picture, but then it is not my job in these letters to provide full and detailed pictures of anything!

Socialism, I have told you, is of many kinds. There is general agreement, however, that it aims at the control by the state of the means of production, that is land and mines and factories and the like, and the means of distribution, like railways, etc., and also banks and similar institutions. The idea is that individuals should not be allowed to exploit any of these methods or institutions, or the labour of others, to their own personal advantage. To-day most of these are privately owned and exploited with the result that some people prosper and grow rich, while society as a whole suffers greatly and the masses remain poor. Also a great deal of the energy of even the owners and controllers of these means of production goes at present in fighting each other in cut-throat competition. If instead of this private war there was a sensible arranging of production and a well thought out distribution, society would be far better off, waste and useless competition would be avoided, and the present great inequalities in wealth between different classes and

peoples would disappear. Therefore production and distribution and some other important activities should be largely socialized or controlled by the State, that is by the people as a whole. That is the basic idea of socialism.

What the state or form of government should be like under socialism is a different question in which we need not go for the moment, although it is a very important matter.

Having agreed as to the ideal of socialism, the next thing to decide is how one is to achieve it. Here socialists part company with each other and there are many groups pointing different ways. Roughly they may be divided into two classes: (1) the slow-change evolutionary groups, which believe in going ahead step by step and working through parliaments, like the British Labour Party and the Fabians; and (2) the revolutionary groups, which do not believe in getting much through parliaments. These latter groups are mostly Marxists. They sometimes go to parliaments but only to obstruct and create trouble and not to co-operate with other groups.

The former evolutionary groups is now very small and even in England it is weakening and the line dividing it from the Liberals and other non-socialist groups is thinning away. So Marxism might now be considered the general socialist creed. But among Marxists also there are two main divisions in Europe—there are the Russian Communists on the one hand, and the old Social Democrats of Germany, Austria and elsewhere on the other—and between the two there is no love lost. These Social Democrats lost a great deal of their old prestige by their failure to live up to their professions during the World War and afterwards. Many of their more ardent spirits have gone over to the communists but they still control the great Trade Union machines in Western Europe. Communism, because of its success in Russia, is an advancing creed. In Europe and all over the world to-day it is the chief opponent of capitalism.

What then is this Marxism? It is a way of interpreting history and politics and economics and human life and human desires. It is a theory as well as a call to action. It is a philosophy which has something to say about most of the activities of man's life. It is an attempt at reducing human history, past, present and future, to a rigid logical system with something of the inevitability of fate or *kismet* about it. Whether life is so very logical after all and so much dependent on hard and fast rules and systems does not seem very obvious and many have doubted this. But Marx surveyed past history as a scientist and drew certain conclusions from it. He saw from the earliest days man struggling for a living; it was a struggle against Nature as well as against brother man. Man worked to get food and the other necessities of life and his methods of doing so gradually changed as time went on and became more complex and advanced. These methods to produce the means of living were, according to Marx, the most important thing in man's life and society's life in every age. They dominated each period of history and influenced all activities and social relations of that period, and as they changed great historical and social changes followed them. To some extent we have seen the great effects of these changes in the course of these letters. For instance, when first agriculture was introduced it made a vast difference. The wandering nomads settled down and villages and cities grew, and because of the greater yield of agriculture, there was a surplus left over, and population grew, and wealth and leisure, which gave rise to arts and handicrafts. Another obvious instance is the Industrial Revolution when the introduction of big machinery to production made another tremendous difference. And there are many other instances.

The methods of production at a certain period of history correspond to a definite stage in the growth of the people. In the course of this work of production, and as a consequence of it, men enter into definite

relations with each other (such as barter, buying, selling, exchange and so on) which are conditioned by and which correspond to their methods of production. These relations taken as a whole constitute the economic structure of society. And on his economic basis are built up the laws, politics, social customs, ideas and everything else. Therefore, according to this view of Marx, as the methods of production change, the economic structure changes, and this is followed by a change in people's ideas, laws, politics, etc.

Marx also looked upon history as a record of struggles between different classes. "The history of all human society, past and present, has been the history of class struggles." The class which controls the means of production is dominant. It exploits the labour of other classes and profits by it. Those who labour do not get the full value of their labour. They get just a part of it for bare necessities, the rest, the surplus, goes to the exploiting class. So the exploiting class gets wealthier from this surplus value. The state and government are controlled by this class which controls production, and the first object of the state thus becomes one of protecting this governing class. "The state is our executive committee for managing the affairs of the governing class as a whole", says Marx. Laws are made for this purpose and people are made to imagine by means of education, religion, and other methods, that the dominance of this class is just and natural. Every attempt is made to cover the class character of the government and the laws by these methods, so that the other classes that are being exploited may not find out the true state of affairs and thus get dissatisfied. If any person does get dissatisfied and challenges this system he is called an enemy of society and morality and a subverter of old established customs and is crushed by the State.

But in spite of all efforts one class cannot remain permanently at the top. The very factors that gave it dominance now work against it. It had become the

ruling and exploiting class because it controlled the then existing means of production. Now, as new methods of production arise, the new classes which control these come into prominence and they refuse to be sat upon. New ideas stir men, there is, what might be called, an ideological revolution which breaks the fetters of the old ideas and dogmas. And then there is a struggle between this rising class and the old class which clings hard to power. The new class inevitably wins because it controls the economic power now, and the old class, having played its part in history, is pushed out of the stage.

The victory of this new class is both political and economic; it symbolises the triumph of the new methods of production. And from this follow changes in the whole fabric of society—new ideas, new political structure, laws, customs, everything is affected. This new class becomes now the exploiting class to the classes under it, till in its turn it is displaced by one of them. So the struggle goes and must go on till there is one class exploiting another. Only when classes disappear and there is only one class left will the struggle end, for then there will be no more room for exploitation. The class cannot exploit itself. Only then will there be equilibrium in society and full co-operation instead of ceaseless struggle and competition, as at present. And the State's chief business of coercion will no longer be required, for there will be no class to coerce, and so gradually the state itself will "wither away", and thus the anarchist ideal will also be approached.

So Marx looked upon history as a grand process of evolution by inevitable class struggles. With a wealth of detail and example he showed how this had taken place in the past, how the feudal times had changed to the capitalist period with the coming of the big machine, and the feudal classes given place to the bourgeoisie. According to him the last class struggle was taking place in our times between the bourgeoisie and the working class. Capitalism was itself producing and

increasing the numbers and strength of this class which would ultimately overwhelm it and establish the class-less society and socialism.

This view of looking at history, which Marx explained, was called the "materialist conception of history." It was called "materialist" because it was not 'idealist', a word which was used a great deal in a special sense by philosophers in Marx's day. The idea of evolution was becoming popular at the time. Darwin, as I have told you, established it in the popular mind so far as the origin and development of species was concerned. But this did not explain in any way human social relations. Some philosophers had tried to explain human progress by vague idealistic notions of the progress of the mind. Marx said all this was wrong. Vague speculation in the air and idealism was according to him a dangerous thing as in this way people were likely to imagine all manner of things which had no real basis. He proceeded therefore in a much more matter of fact and scientific way examining facts. Hence the word 'materialist'.

Marx constantly talks of exploitation and class struggles. Many of us do that and get rather excited about it. But, according to Marx, this is not a matter for anger on good virtuous advice. The exploitation was not the fault of the person exploiting. The dominance of one class over another was the natural result of historical progress and would in due time give place to another arrangement. If a person belonged to the dominant class and as such exploited others, this was not a terrible sin for him. He was a part of a system and it was absurd to call him unkind names. We are much too apt to forget this distinction between individuals and systems. India is under British imperialism and we fight this imperialism with all our might. But the Englishmen who happen to support this system in India are not to blame. They are just little cogs in a huge machine powerless of making any difference to its movement. In the same way some of us may

consider the zamindari system all wrong and most harmful to the tenantry which are exploited terribly under it. But that again does not mean that the individual zamindar is to blame. So also the capitalists who are often blamed as exploiters. The fault always lies with the system not with individuals.

Marx did not preach class conflict. He showed that in fact it existed and had always existed in some form or other. His object in writing "Capital" was "to lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society" and this uncovering disclosed these fierce conflict between different classes in society. These conflicts are not always obvious as class struggles because the dominant class always tries to hide its own class character. But when the existing order is threatened then it throws away all pretences and its real character appears, and there is open warfare between the classes. Forms of democracy and ordinary laws and procedure, all disappear when this happens. Instead of these class struggles being due to misunderstanding or the villainy of agitators, as some people say, they are inherent in society, and they actually increase with a better understanding of the conflict of interests.

Let us compare this theory of Marx's with existing conditions in India. The British government has long claimed that its rule in India was based on justice and the good of the people of India, and in the past there is no doubt that many of our countrymen believed that there was some little truth in this claim. But now that this rule is seriously challenged by a great popular movement its real character appears in all its crudity and nakedness and even the half-witted can see the reality of this imperialist exploitation resting on the bayonet. All the covering of gilded forms and soft words has been removed. Special ordinances and the suppression of the most ordinary rights of speech, meeting, press become the ordinary laws and procedure of the country. The greater the challenge to existing authority the more this will happen. So also when one class seriously

threatens another. We can see this too happening in our country to-day in the savage sentences given to the peasants and workers and those who work for them.

Marx's theory of history was thus of an ever changing and advancing society. There was no fixity in it. It was a dynamic conception. And it marched on inevitably whatever might happen, one social order being replaced by another. But a social order only disappeared after it had done its job and grown to its fullest extent. Till then it would not go. When society grew beyond this even then it simply tore the clothes of the old order, which were now too tight for it and fettered it, and put on new and bigger garments.

It was man's job, according to Marx, to help in this grand historical process of development. All the previous stages had been passed. The last class struggle between the capitalist bourgeois society and the working class was now taking place. (This of course in the advanced industrial countries where capitalism was fully developed. Other countries where capitalism was not developed were backward and their struggles were therefore of a somewhat mixed and different character. But essentially even there some aspect of this struggle was taking place as the world was becoming more and more inter-related.) Marx said that capitalism would have to face difficulty after difficulty, crisis after crisis, till it toppled over, because of its inherent want of equilibrium. It is more than sixty years since Marx wrote and capitalism has had many a crisis since then. But far from ending, it has survived them and has grown more powerful, except in Russia where it exists no longer. But now, as I write, it seems to be grievously sick all over the world and doctors shake their heads about its chances of recovery.

It is said that capitalism managed to prolong its life to our day because of a factor which perhaps Marx did not fully consider. This was the exploitation of colonial empires by the industrial countries of the west. This gave fresh life and prosperity to it, at the expense

of course of the poor countries so exploited.

We condemn often enough the exploitation of the poor by the rich, of the worker by the capitalist, under present day capitalism. This is no doubt a fact, not because of the fault of the capitalist but because the system itself is based on such exploitation. At the same time let us not imagine that this is a new thing under capitalism. Exploitation has been the hard and invariable lot of the workers and the poor in past ages under all systems. Indeed it might be said that, in spite of capitalist exploitation they are better off to-day than during any past period. But that is not saying very much.

The greatest modern exponent of Marxism has been Lenin. Not only did he expound it and explain it but he lived up to it. And yet he has warned us not to consider Marxism as a dogma which cannot be varied. Convinced of the truth of its essence, he was not prepared to accept or apply its details everywhere unthinkingly. He tells us: "In no sense do we regard the Marxist theory as something complete and unassailable. On the contrary, we are convinced that that theory is only the corner-stone of that science which socialists must advance in all directions if they do not wish to fall behind life. We think that it is especially necessary for Russian Socialists to undertake an independent study of the Marxist theory, for that theory gives only general guiding ideas, which can be applied differently in England, for instance, than in France, differently in France than in Germany, differently in Germany than in Russia."

I have tried to tell you in this letter something about Marx's theories but I do not know if you can make much of this patchwork of mine and whether it will convey any clear ideas to you. It is well to know these theories because they are moving vast masses of men and women to-day and they may be of help to us in our own country. A great nation, Russia, as well as the other parts of the Soviet Union, have made Marx their

major prophet, and in the world's great distress to-day many people in search of remedies look to him for possible inspiration.

I shall finish up this letter by quoting some lines from the English poet Tennyson:

"The old order changeth yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

Marx was a believer in the orders changing, but not in religion. He called it the "opium of the people".

THE VICTORIAN AGE IN ENGLAND

February 22, 1933

In my letters dealing with the growth of the socialistic idea I have pointed out to you that the English type of socialism was the most moderate of all. It was the least revolutionary of the ideologies then prevalent in Europe, and it looked forward to a very gradual and step by step change to better conditions. Sometimes when trade was bad, and there was a depression and unemployment increased and wages fell and people suffered, then a revolutionary wave would rise even in England. But with the return of better conditions this would subside. This moderation of English thought during the nineteenth century was intimately connected with the prosperity of England, for prosperity and revolution have little in common. Revolution means a great change and those who are fairly satisfied with existing conditions have no desire to rush into risky and rash adventures on the off chance of bettering them.

The nineteenth century was indeed the century of England's greatness. The lead she had taken in the eighteenth century by having the Industrial Revolution and building the new factories in advance of other countries, she kept up for the great part of the nineteenth. She was, as I have said, the workshop of the world, and wealth poured in to her from far countries. The exploitation of India and other colonial possessions gave her a rich and unceasing tribute and added greatly to her prestige. While changes took place in almost all the countries of Europe, England seemed to continue without any revolution or bust-up, strong and solid as a rock. There were crises from time

to time but they were overcome by giving a few more people the vote. Meanwhile, as we have seen, in France, republics and empires gave way to each other in rapid succession; in Italy, a new nation arose uniting the whole peninsula after long ages of disunion; in Germany, a new empire came into being. The smaller countries, like Belgium, Denmark, Greece, also changed in many ways. Austria, the seat still of the oldest dynasty in Europe, the Hapsburg, had been humbled repeatedly by France, Italy and Prussia. Only Russia, in the east, appeared unchanging, with the autocratic Tsar ruling like a Grand Mughal. But Russia was very backward industrially and was a peasant nation; the breath of the new ideas and the new industry had not touched her yet.

England's wealth and empire and sea power gave her a commanding position in Europe and the world. She was the leading nation with her tentacles all over the world. The United States of America were still wrapped up in their own troubles and concerned more with their internal growth than with world affairs. Wonderful changes were taking place in methods of transport, making the world apparently smaller and more compact. These again helped England in tightening her hold on distant lands. In spite of all these changes England's form of government remained the same—a constitutional monarch, that is a ruler with little power, and a parliament supposed to be supreme. The parliament was at first elected by a handful of land-owners and rich merchants but more and more people were given the vote in the course of the century to ward off trouble, whenever a crisis arose.

For a great part of the century Victoria was queen in England. She belonged to the German house of Hanover which had given a number of Georges to the English throne during the eighteenth century. She came to the throne in 1837, as a girl of eighteen and she reigned for 63 years till the end of the century, 1900. This long period in England is often referred to as the

Victorian Age. Queen Victoria thus saw many great changes in Europe and elsewhere, old landmarks disappearing and new ones taking their place. She saw the revolutions in Europe, the change in France, and the rise of the Italian kingdom and the German empire. By the time she died she was a kind of grandmother to Europe and European monarchs. But there was one other ruler in Europe, a contemporary of Victoria's, who had a similar record. This was Francis Joseph of the house of Hapsburg of Austria. He was also eighteen when he came to the throne of his ramshackle empire in the year of revolution, 1848. For sixty-eight years he reigned and managed to keep Austria and Hungary and other parts hold together under him. But the World War put an end to him and his empire.

Victoria was more fortunate. She watched during her reign the power of England grow and her empire spread out. There was trouble in Canada when she came to the throne. The colony was in open rebellion and many of the colonists wanted to cut away from England and join their neighbours, the United States of America. But England had learnt a lesson from the American war and she hastened to appease the Canadians by giving them a large measure of self-rule. Soon afterwards this developed into full self-governing dominion. This was a new type of experiment in empire, for freedom and empire go ill together, but circumstances forced England's hand as the alternative was the loss of Canada. As the majority of people in Canada were of English descent there was a strong sentimental bond with the mother country. The new country, being a vast undeveloped land with a sparse population, had to rely a great deal on English manufactures and English money for development. So there was no conflict then between the interests of the two countries and the curious and novel relationship between them was not put to any strain.

Later in the century this method of giving self-government to British settlements abroad was extended

to Australia, which had been a convict settlement till almost the middle of the century. By the end of the century Australia was a free dominion in the empire.

On the other hand in India the British hold was tightened and war after war of conquest extended the British Indian empire. India was a full dependency of the British. There was no shadow of self-government. The Revolt of 1857 was crushed and India was made to feel the full weight of the empire. I have told you elsewhere how she was exploited in a variety of ways by England. India, of course, was *the* empire of Britain and to proclaim this fact to the world Queen Victoria took the title of Empress of India. But, besides India, Britain also had many other smaller dependencies in various parts of the world.

The British Empire thus became a curious medley of two types of countries: the self-governing countries, which later became the free dominions, and the dependencies and protectorates. The former were more or less family members acknowledging the headship of the mother country, the latter were definitely the servants and slaves of the establishment, looked down upon, ill treated and exploited. The self-governing dominions consisted of British people or other Europeans and their descendants, the dependencies were all non-British, non-European. This difference between the two parts of the British empire has persisted till now.

England with her wealth and empire was more or less a satisfied power; not wholly so, because the imperialist instinct is never satisfied with any frontier and always wants to expand. Still England's main worry was not to take more but to protect what she had got. In particular, India was her star possession to which she wanted to hold on to the last. All her foreign policy revolved round her possession of India and the safety of the sea routes to the East. She meddled in Egypt and ultimately dominated the country because of this; she interfered in Persia and Afghanistan also because of this. By a clever move she bought up the shares of the Suez

Canal company and thus gained control over the canal.

Most of the continental powers of Europe did not worry her for the greater part of the 19th century as they were full of their own troubles and were often fighting each other. England continued her traditional game of keeping the balance in Europe by playing off one country against another and taking advantage of continental rivalries. Napoleon III of France seemed dangerous but he collapsed and France took some time to recover. Germany was still too young to be considered a serious rival. But one country seemed to challenge the British Empire and this was Tsarist Russia, backward Russia, but still on the map a great country. As England had spread in India and South Asia, Russia had spread in North and Central Asia, and her frontier was not far from India. This nearness of Russia was a constant nightmare to the British. I have already told you, when dealing with India, of the British invasions of Afghanistan and the Afghan wars. These were almost entirely due to fear of Tsarist Russia.

In Europe also England and Russia came to blows. Russia longed to have a good sea port, which was open all the year round and did not freeze in winter. In spite of her vast territories all her ports were somewhere near the Arctic circle and were frozen up for part of the year. In India and Afghanistan she was stopped by the British from reaching the sea; so also in Persia. The Black sea was bottled up by the Turkish possession of the Bosphorous and the Dardanelles. In the past she had tried to take Constantinople but the Turks were too strong for her. Now the Turks were weak and the coveted prize seemed almost within grasp. She tried to take it. But England stood in the way and, for entirely selfish reasons, she became the champion of the Turks. By war in 1854 in the Crimea, and later a threat of another war, Russia was kept back.

It was during this Crimean war of 1854 to 1856 that Florence Nightingale led a gallant band of women

volunteers to nurse the wounded. This was an unusual thing to do at the time for Victorian middle-class women were stay at home folk and flourished chiefly in drawing rooms (like many of our own so-called advanced women folk in India to-day). Florence Nightingale set a new example of active service to them and drew many out of their drawing rooms. She has thus an important place in the development of the women's movement.

The form of government in Britain was what is called a constitutional monarchy or a "crowned republic". This meant that the wearer of the crown had no real power but was just the mouthpiece of the ministers whom Parliament trusted. Politically he (or she) was supposed to be just a puppet in the ministers' hands; he was 'above politics' it was said. As a matter of fact no man of intelligence or will can be a mere puppet, and the English king or queen had plenty of opportunity of interfering with public affairs. This is usually done behind the scenes and the public seldom know of it till long afterwards. Any open interference would probably be greatly resented and might imperil the monarchy. The one great virtue that a constitutional monarch must possess is tact; if he has this he can carry on and make himself felt in many ways.

Constitutionally and legally, the presidents of republics (like the president of the United States of America) have far more power than the crowned heads of parliamentary countries. But the former change frequently and the latter remain for long periods and can influence affairs continuously, though quietly, in any particular direction. The king also has numerous opportunities of intrigue and exercising social pressure, for in the social world he is supreme. Indeed the whole atmosphere of royal courts is one of authoritarianism, of precedence and titles, and classes, and this sets a standard for the whole country. It is not compatible with social equality and the abolition of classes. There can be no doubt that the presence of a royal court in England has had a great deal of influence in moulding

the Englishman's mentality and in making him accept the class division of society. Or perhaps it is more correct to say that it is because of this acceptance of classes one above the other that the institution of royalty has managed to survive in England although it has disappeared from almost all the great countries of the world. "Every Englishman loves a lord" is an old saying and there is much truth in it. Nowhere in Europe or America, and perhaps nowhere in Asia, except in Japan and India, are class distinctions so sharp as in England. It is strange that England should be so backward socially and so fundamentally conservative, when she was the leader in the past in political democracy and industrialism.

The British Parliament is called the "Mother of Parliaments". It has had a long and honourable career and in many matters it was a pioneer in the fight against the king's autocracy. That autocracy gave place to the oligarchy of Parliament, that is, rule by a small land owning and governing class. Democracy then came with a flourish of trumpets and, after many a tussle, votes for electing members to the House of Commons were given to the majority of the population. In effect, this resulted not in real democratic control but in the control of Parliament by the rich industrialists. Instead of democracy there was plutocracy.

The British Parliament developed a strange system for doing its business of governing and legislating. This was the two-party system. There was not much difference between the two parties, they did not stand out for any opposing principles. Both of them were rich men's parties accepting the existing social system. One of the parties had a greater number of the old land owning classes, the other had more of the rich factory owners. But it was a question of Tweedledum and Tweedledee. They used to be called Tories and Whigs; later, in the nineteenth century, they came to be styled conservatives and liberals. They shouted at each other in Parliament and outside but this was a kind of game

between the two, the opposition itself being part of this game. When one party was in office, the other was in opposition, and, strangely enough the latter was called "His Majesty's Opposition", the party in office having become "His Majesty's Government".

In other European countries it was very different, and real parties with different programmes and ideologies fought each other passionately in parliaments and outside. But in England it was all like a family affair and opposition itself became a kind of co-operation, and each party took its turn of office and opposition. The real clash and class conflict between the rich and the poor did not show itself in Parliament as both the big parties were rich men's parties. There were no religious questions of importance to rouse people's passions, nor were there any racial or national questions (as there were on the continent). The only real element of excitement was brought in later in the century by the Irish Nationalist members for with them Ireland's freedom was a national question.

When two such big parties run members for parliament it becomes very difficult for independent individuals or small groups to get elected. In spite of democracy and the vote, the poor voter has little say in the matter. He can either vote for the candidate of one of the parties or stay at home and not vote at all. And the members of the parties in parliament have little independence left. They have to carry out the orders of their party chiefs and vote, and can do little else. For only in this way can they develop solidarity in the party and strength to defeat the rival party and thus gain office. This solidarity and uniformity is no doubt good in its own way but it is very far from real democracy.

And we see that even in England, which is often held up as an example in democratic progress, democracy was not a brilliant success. The great problem of government, as to how the best men should be chosen by the people to govern them, was not satisfactorily

solved. Democracy in action meant a great deal of shouting and public speaking and the poor voter being induced to choose a person about whom he knew nothing. General elections have been described as public auctions where all manner of promises are made. However, in spite of all these drawbacks, this pseudo or false democracy carried on because England was prosperous and this prosperity prevented breakdowns of the system and brought a measure of content.

The two great leaders of the English political parties in the second half of the nineteenth century were Disraeli and Gladstone. Disraeli, who later became the Earl of Beaconsfield, was the leader of the conservatives and many times Prime Minister. This was a remarkable feat for him as he was a Jew with no important connections and Jews are not liked by the English. But by sheer ability and perseverance he conquered the prejudice against him and forced his way to the front. He was the great imperialist and it was he who made Victoria Empress of India. Gladstone belonged to one of the rich old English families. He became the leader of the Liberal party and was also Prime Minister many times. So far as imperialism and foreign policy was concerned there was no radical difference between Gladstone and Disraeli. But Disraeli was frank about his imperialism; Gladstone, typical Englishman as he was, covered it up with fine phrases and pious exhortations, and seemed to make out that God was his chief adviser in everything he did. He led a great campaign against Turkish atrocities in the Balkans and of course Disraeli in sheer opposition took up the side of the Turks. As a matter of fact both the Turks and their subjects of different nationalities in the Balkans were to blame, and they indulged alternately in the most frightful massacres and atrocities.

Gladstone also championed Home Rule for Ireland. He did not succeed and so great was the English opposition that the Liberal party itself split up in two, and one part of it joined the conservatives, now called

the Unionists as they desired to continue the union with Ireland.

But more of this and of other happenings in the Victorian Age I must tell you in a subsequent letter.

ENGLAND BECOMES THE WORLD'S MONEY-LENDER

February 23, 1933

The nineteenth century prosperity of England was due to her industries and to her exploitation of her colonies and dependencies. In particular, her growing wealth was founded on four industries—'basic' industries they might be called; these were cotton, coal, iron and ship building. A host of other industries, heavy as well as light, grew up round these and apart from these. Great business houses and banking houses were built up. British merchant ships were to be found in almost every part in the world carrying not only British goods but also the goods manufactured by other industrial countries. They became the chief carriers of merchandise in the world. The great insurance office of Lloyd's in London became the centre of the world's shipping. These industries and businesses dominated Parliament.

Wealth poured into the country and the upper and middle classes grew richer and richer; some part of it reached the working classes also and raised their standard of living. What was to be done with all the wealth that the rich were getting? To keep it unused was folly, and everybody was keen on pushing industry and thus producing more and more goods and getting more and more profits. A great part of this wealth went into new factories and railways and such like undertakings in England and Scotland. After a while, when there was a very great number of factories and the country was thoroughly industrialised, the rate of profit naturally grew less as there was more competition.

Capitalists with money then looked abroad for more profitable fields of investment and found plenty of opportunities. All over the world railways were being built, and cables and telegraph lines and factories. The surplus money of Britain was poured into many of these undertakings in Europe, America, Africa and the British dependencies. The United States of America, rich as they were in their resources were rapidly growing and they absorbed a good deal of British money for their railways, etc. In South America, and especially in the Argentine, the British owned huge plantations. Canada and Australia were built up with British capital. In China I have told you something of the battle of concessions. In India of course the British were dominant, and lent money for railways and other works on their own rather extravagant terms.

Thus England became the money-lender to the world, and London was the world's money market. But do not think that this meant that huge bags full of gold or silver or cash were sent from England to other countries when money was lent. Modern business is not carried on in this way, or there would not be enough gold and silver to go round. Foolish people attach a great deal of importance to gold and silver, but they are just a means of exchange and of circulating goods. One cannot eat them or wear them or use them in any way, except of course as ornaments, which does little good to anybody. Real wealth consists in possessing goods which can be used. So when England, or rather British capitalists, advanced money, it meant that they had invested a sum in a foreign industry or railway, and instead of hard cash, British goods were sent out. British machinery or railway material would thus be sent to foreign countries. This helped British industry, and at the same time offered opportunities to the British investing class to invest their surplus cash at a handsome profit.

Money-lending is a profitable business; and the more England adopted this profession the richer she

grew. A huge leisured class grew up, which lived entirely on the profits and dividends from this business. They did not have to work to produce anything. They held shares in some railway company or tea plantation or other concern and dividends came to them regularly. English colonies of these leisured people grew up in many desirable places, like the French Riviera, Italy and Switzerland; but of course most of them remained in England.

How did all the countries, that had borrowed money from England in this way, pay their interest on it or dividends? Again, they could not send it in gold or silver. They did not have enough of these to pay year after year. They paid therefore in goods, not so much in manufactured goods as England was herself the leading manufacturing country, but in food products and raw material. They poured into England in an unceasing stream wheat, tea, coffee, meat, fruit, wines, cotton, wool, etc.

Commerce between two nations consists of an exchange of articles. It is not possible for one country to go on buying and the other selling. If this was attempted payment would have to be made in gold or silver, and soon there would be no more gold or silver left or else the one-sided trade would stop of itself. In mutual trade an exchange takes place which adjusts itself, and is sometimes in favour of one country, sometimes in favour of the other. If we examine the trade of England during the nineteenth century, we would find that on the whole she received more goods than she sent out. That is, although she exported a vast quantity of goods, she actually imported more goods in value, with this difference that she exported manufactured articles and imported principally food articles and raw materials. Thus apparently she bought more than she sold, which does not seem to be a good way of carrying on business. But as a matter of fact the excess of imports represented the profit on the money lent out. It was the tribute paid by debtor countries as well as

dependencies like India.

All the profit from investments did not come over to England. Much of it remained in the debtor country and was re-invested by British capitalists. So that the total volume of British investments abroad went on increasing without any fresh money or goods being sent out from England. In India we are frequently reminded of the vast British investments in the railways, canals and numerous other works, and an enormous sum is said to represent the 'debt' of India to England on this account. Indians challenge this on many counts, but we need not go into that here. But it is worth noting that these huge investments do not represent much fresh capital from England. They represent the re-investment of profits made in India. In the days of Plassey and Clive, as I have told you, a huge amount of gold and treasure was actually taken away from India to England. After that the exploitation of India took different and less obvious forms, and part of the profits of it were invested in the country.

England found that the only possible way to carry on the profession of money-lending on a world scale was to accept payment of interest in goods. She could not insist on gold, as I have shown you above. This had two important results. England allowed food-stuffs to come from abroad to feed her population, and allowed her agriculture to suffer. She concentrated on manufacturing articles industrially for sale abroad, and ignored the plight of her farmers. If she could get cheap food from abroad why should she trouble to raise it herself? And if she could make more profit by industry, why should she bother about agriculture? So England became a purely industrial country, dependent for her food on foreign countries.

The second result was that she adopted the policy of free trade, that is, she did not tax the foreign goods that came to her ports, or taxed them very little. As she was the leading industrial country, she had little to fear for a long time from any competition as regards

manufactured goods. Taxing foreign goods thus meant for her taxing foreign food and raw material that came to her. This would have raised the price of the people's food and of her own manufactured articles. Besides, if she stopped foreign goods from coming in by heavy taxation, how were the foreign debtor countries to pay their tribute to England? They could only pay in goods. This was the reason why England adopted *free trade* when all other industrial countries were *protectionists*, that is, were protecting their growing industries by taxing foreign goods coming to them. The United States, France, Germany were all protectionists.

The question of free trade and protection has risen in every country and been fiercely argued. It rises in India to-day. Indeed the whole world is now concerned with it. In England for long this was the main division between the two great parties, the Liberals being the Free Traders. Perhaps it is not possible to give an answer to the question, which would apply under all circumstances. I shall remind you of the early days of the British in India, when they put on heavy duties in England on Indian cotton goods in order to keep them out. England was protectionist then, when it suited her. Later she took to free trade, when that suited her. And now, only a few months back, as I write, she has again become a protectionist country and has put on heavy duties on foreign goods. But she is no longer the world's money-lender.

The nineteenth century English policy of neglecting agriculture and concentrating on industry and getting food from outside and living in comfort on tribute from abroad seemed a profitable and agreeable one. But it had its dangers, as are obvious enough now. The policy was based on England's supremacy in industry and on her huge foreign trade. But if this supremacy should go and with it her foreign trade dwindle, what then? How would she then pay for her food? And even if she could pay for the food, how would she get it from abroad if a

powerful enemy stood in the way? During the last World War her people nearly starved, because her food supply was nearly cut off. An even greater danger than this is the progressive dwindling of her foreign trade because of foreign competition. This competition became marked in the eighties of the nineteenth century, when the United States of America and Germany began to seek foreign markets. Gradually other nations became industrialised and joined this quest, and now almost the whole world is to some extent industrialised. Each country is trying to make most of the goods it needs and to keep out foreign goods. India wants to keep out foreign cloth. What then is Lancashire to do, and the other British industries dependent on foreign trade?

These are hard questions for England to answer, and there seem to be hard times in store for her. She cannot even retire into her shell and live a self-sufficing existence, producing her own food and necessities. The modern world is far too complicated for this. And even if she could cut herself off, it is doubtful if she could produce enough food for her over-grown population. But these questions are of to-day; they had little importance in the nineteenth century. So England then gambled with her future and banked on continued supremacy. It was a great game and the stakes were high—to be the leading nation of the world or collapse. There was no middle stage for her. But the Victorian middle class Englishman was not lacking in self-confidence or conceit. His long prosperity and success, and leadership in industry and business, had convinced him of his superiority over the rest of mankind. He looked down on all foreigners. The peoples of Asia and Africa were of course backward and barbarous, apparently created to give the English an opportunity of exercising their inborn genius for ruling and improving the backward races of mankind. Even the peoples of the European continent were ignorant and superstitious foreigners. Very few of them even knew the English

language! The English were the chosen people at the pinnacle of civilization, the vanguard marching at the head of Europe, which itself was at the head of the rest of the world. The British Empire was a semi-divine institution which put the final seal on the greatness of the race. Lord Curzon, who was a Viceroy of India thirty years ago, and who was one of the ablest Englishmen of his time, dedicated a book of his to "those who believe that the British Empire is, under Providence, the greatest influence for good that the world has ever seen".

All this that I am writing about the Victorian Englishman seems rather far fetched and extraordinary, and perhaps you may think that I am trying to be humorous at his expense. It is strange that any sensible person should behave in this way and adopt this amazing, conceited and self-righteous attitude. But national groups will believe almost anything, if it tickles their vanity and is to their advantage to do so. Individuals would never think of acting in this crude and vulgar manner towards their neighbours, but nations have no such compunctions. We are all, unfortunately, made that way and strut about praising our own national virtues. The Victorian Englishman was a type which is found, with minor changes, almost everywhere. All the European nations have had their national prototypes of him, the German one was particularly aggressive twenty years ago. So also in America and Asia.

The prosperity of England and Western Europe was due to the growth of industrial capitalism. This capitalism marched ahead in its ceaseless search for profits. Success and profits were the only gods that drew the worship of the people, for capitalism had nothing to do with religion or morality. It was the doctrine of cut-throat competition between individuals and nations, and the devil take the hindmost! The Victorians prided themselves on their tolerance in religion. They believed in progress and science, and

their very success in business and empire proved to them that they were the elect who had survived in the struggle. Had not Darwin said so? Their tolerance in matters of religion was really indifference. An English writer, R. H. Tawney, has described this state of affairs rather well. God, he says, had been put in his place, away from earthly matters. "There was a limited monarchy in Heaven, as well as upon Earth!" This was the view of the prosperous bourgeoisie, but church going and religion were encouraged for the masses, in the hope that this might keep them from revolutionary ideas. Tolerance in religion did not mean tolerance in other matters. There was no tolerance in matters to which the majority attached importance, and under any strain all tolerance disappears. The British Government in India is supremely tolerant about religion and makes a virtue of it. As a matter of fact it does not care in the least what happens to religion. But even a little criticism of its politics or anything that it does makes it prick up its ears and no one can accuse it of tolerance then! The greater the strain, the greater the fall; and if the strain is great enough, the government sets aside all pretence to tolerance and indulges in open and unabashed terrorism. We see this in India to-day. A short while ago I read in the papers that a boy hardly out of his teens had been sentenced to eight years' rigorous imprisonment for writing threatening letters to some British officials!

The growth of capitalist industry brought many changes. Capitalism functioned on a bigger and bigger scale; it was more profitable and more efficient for big concerns to function than small ones. So huge combines and trusts grew up, controlling whole industries and they swallowed up the small independent producers and factories. The old ideas of *laissez faire* collapsed before this as there was far less chance or opportunity for individual initiative left. The powerful combines and corporations dominated governments.

Capitalism led also to another and fiercer phase of imperialism. As competition between the industrial powers grew in the second half of the nineteenth century, they looked farther afield for markets and raw materials. All over the world there was a fierce scramble for empire. I have already told you in some detail of what happened in Asia—in India, China, Farther India and Persia. The European powers now fell like vultures on Africa, and divided it amongst themselves. Here also England took the largest share—Egypt in the north and huge slices of territory east and west and south. France also did well. Italy wanted to share in the booty, but much to everyone's surprise she was severely beaten by Abyssinia. Germany got a share, but was not satisfied. Everywhere imperialism, shouting, threatening, grasping, was rampant. Rudyard Kipling, the popular poet of British imperialism, sang of the "white man's burden". The French talked of the *mission civilisatrice*, the civilizing mission of France. The Germans of course had to spread their *Kultur*. So these civilizers and improvers and bearers of other people's burdens went in a spirit of utter sacrifice and sat on the backs of the brown man and the yellow and the black. And nobody sang about the black man's burden.

The world was not big enough for all these grasping rival imperialisms. The fierce capitalistic urge for markets pushed each country on and often they clashed with each other. Several times war seemed to hang in the balance between England and France. But the real clash of interests came between English and German industry. Germany had caught up England in industry and shipping and challenged her in every market. But she found the best parts of the Earth's surface already occupied by England. Proud and high spirited and chafing at being kept back by other nations, she prepared strenuously for a great struggle with them. All Europe prepared and armies and navies grew. Alliances were made between different

countries till there seemed to be two armed hosts facing each other—the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria and Italy, and the Dual Alliance of France and Russia, with England privately attached to them.

Meanwhile at the end of the century, England had a little war of her own in South Africa. The discovery of gold in the Boer republic of the Transvaal led to this war in 1899. The Boers fought with amazing courage and perseverance for three years against the leading power of Europe. They were crushed and had to acknowledge defeat. But soon after the British (the Liberal Party was then in office) performed a wise and generous deed by offering full self-government to their recent enemies. A little later the whole of South Africa became a free dominion of the British Empire.

CIVIL WAR IN AMERICA

February 27, 1933

The old world with its conflicts and intrigues, its kings and its revolutions, its hates and its nationalisms, has taken up a great deal of our time. Let us now cross the Atlantic and visit the new world of America, and see how this fared after it had shaken off the grasping hand of Europe. The United States in particular demand our attention. From small beginnings they have grown and grown till to-day they seem to dominate the world situation. England has no longer pride of place to-day; she is not the world's money-lender now but is an unhappy debtor country, like all the others in Europe, asking the United States for kind and generous treatment. The mantle of the money-lender has fallen on America; wealth pours into her, and she breeds millionaires in surprising quantities. But, as in the case of Midas of old, her touch of gold has not brought her much joy, and her masses are suffering from want and poverty to-day in spite of her millionaires.

The thirteen sea board states that broke off from England in 1775 had a population of well under four millions. To-day the city of New York alone has about double that population, and the whole of the United States have a population of a hundred and twenty-five millions. There are many more states now in the union, and they extend right across the continent to the Pacific Ocean. The nineteenth century saw the growth of this great century, not only in extent and population, but also in modern industry and commerce, wealth and influence. The states had many difficulties and troubles and some wars and entanglements with Europe, but the

greatest of their trials came from a bitter and devastating Civil War between the States of the North and those of the South.

A few years after America became free there was the Revolution in France followed by the wars of Napoleon. Both Napoleon and England tried to destroy each other's commerce and in doing this came into conflict with the United States. American over-sea commerce was quite paralysed and this led to another war with England in 1812. Nothing much happened as a result of this two years' war. In the course of this war, when Napoleon had been disposed of at Elba and England had her hands free, the British managed to capture Washington, the capital city, and they burnt down and destroyed all the important public buildings including the Capital, the building where Congress is held, and the White House, the residence of the presidents. Subsequently the British were defeated.

Even before this war the States had added a large slice of territory in the South. This was the old French colony of Louisiana which Napoleon sold to them as he was quite unable to defend it from British naval attacks. A few years later, in 1822, a purchase from Spain this time brought Florida to the States, and in 1848 a successful war with Mexico brought several states in the South-West, including California. Many of the names of cities in this south-western part are Spanish still, and remind one of the days when the Spaniards ruled here or the Spanish speaking Mexicans. Everybody has heard of Los Angeles, the great city of Cinemadom, and of San Francisco.

While Europe was having its repeated attempts at revolution and repression the United States kept on spreading westward. Repression in Europe helped immigration and tales of vast territories and high wages attracted large numbers from the European countries. As population spread to the west new states were formed and added to the Union.

Between the northern states and the southern there

was a great difference from the very beginning. The northern were industrial, where the new big machine industry spread rapidly; in the south there were large plantations worked by slave labour. Slavery was legal, but in the North it was not popular and had little importance. The South depended entirely on slave labour. The slaves were of course Negroes from Africa. No white people were slaves. "All men are born equal" of the Declaration of Independence applied to the whites, not to the blacks.

The story of how these Negroes were brought from Africa is a very sad one. The slave trade began early in the seventeenth century, and a regular supply was kept up till 1863. At first, cargo boats passing the west African coast—a part of it is still called the "slave coast"—picked up the Africans, whenever they could do so easily, and carried them to America. Among the Africans themselves there was very little slavery; only prisoners of war or debtors were so treated. It was found that this carrying of Africans to America and selling them as slaves was a very profitable business. The slave trade grew and was subsidised as a business chiefly by the English, the Spanish and the Portuguese. Special ships—slave traders—were built with galleries between decks. In these galleries the unhappy Negroes were made to lie down, all chained up, and each couple fettered together. The voyage across the Atlantic lasted many weeks, sometimes months. During all these weeks and months these Negroes lay in these narrow galleries, shackled together, and all the space that was allowed to each of them was five and a half feet long by sixteen inches wide!

Liverpool became a great city on the foundation of the slave trade. As early as 1713 in the Peace of Utrecht England extorted from Spain the privilege of carrying slaves between Africa and Spanish America. Even before this England had supplied slaves to the English territories in America. An attempt was thus made in the eighteenth century to make the Africa-

America slave trade an English monopoly. In 1730 Liverpool had 15 ships engaged in this trade. The number went on growing, till there were 132 ships in 1792, employed by Liverpool in the slave trade. The early days of the Industrial Revolution led to a great advance in cotton spinning in Lancashire in England, and this led to a demand for more slaves in the United States. For the cotton used by the Lancashire mills came from the great cotton plantations of the southern states. These cotton plantations were rapidly extended, more slaves were brought over from Africa and every effort was made to breed Negroes! In 1790 there were 697,000 slaves in the United States; in 1861 the number rose to 4,000,000.

Early in the nineteenth century the British Parliament passed stringent laws against slavery. Other countries in Europe and America followed. But even when the slave trade was thus outlawed, Negroes were still carried from Africa to America, with this difference that the conditions of their journey were far worse. They could not be carried openly, so they were hidden away from sight on loose shelves, one on top of the other. Sometimes, an American writer tells us, "one crowded on to the lap of another, and with legs on legs, like riders on a crowded toboggan!" It is difficult to imagine the full horror of all this. Conditions were so filthy that the slave ships had to be abandoned after four or five voyages. But the profits were huge and during the height of the trade at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century as many as a hundred thousand slaves were carried every year from the African Slave Coast. And remember that the carrying away of this number meant the killing of far greater numbers in the raids to capture the Negroes.

All the principal countries made the trade illegal early in the nineteenth century or thereabouts. Even the United States did so. But although the slave trade was outlawed, slavery itself continued to be legal in

America, that is to say that the old slaves continued as slaves. And because slavery was legal, the slave trade also continued in spite of prohibition. When Britain put an end to slavery also then New York became the principal port for the slave trade.

Although New York was the port for this trade for many years, till the middle of the century, the North was against slavery. The South, on the other hand, required these slaves for plantation work. Some of the States abolished slavery, others retained it. Negroes would often run away from a slavery State to a non-slavery one and there would be disputes about them.

The economic interests of the North and the South were different and friction arose about tariffs and customs duties as early as 1830. Threats of breaking away from the Union were made. The States were jealous of their rights and did not like too much interference from the federal government. Two parties arose in the country, one favouring state sovereignty, the other wanting a strong central government. All these points of difference divided the North and South further from each other, and wherever new States were added to the Union the question arose which side they would support. Where would the majority lie? The population of the North was increasing rapidly because of the immigration from Europe and this made Southern people fear that soon they would be overwhelmed by the numbers of the North and out-voted on every question. So tension increased between the North and South.

Meanwhile an agitation grew up in the North for the total abolition of slavery. The people who were in favour of this were called the "Abolitionists", and their principal leader was William Lloyd Garrison. In 1831 Garrison brought out a paper called the "Liberator" to support his anti-slavery agitation. In the very first issue of this paper he made clear that he was not going to compromise on this issue and would not be moderate

about it. Some of his sentences from that issue have become famous and I shall give them to you here:

"I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject I do not wish to think, or speak, or write with moderation. No! No! tell a man whose house is on fire to give a moderate alarm; tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hands of a ravisher; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen—but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—and I will be heard."

This brave attitude was however confined to a small minority. Most of those who opposed slavery did not want to interfere with it where it already existed. Still the tension grew between the North and the South for this was due to their different economic interests which conflicted especially on the tariff question.

In 1860 Abraham Lincoln was elected president of the United States and his election was a signal for the South to break away. He was opposed to slavery but even so he had made it clear that there would be no interference with it where it existed. He was not prepared to see it extended to new States or to give it legality. The South was not appeased by this assurance and State after State seceded from the Union. The United States were going to pieces. Such was the terrible position that faced the new president. He made another effort to win over the South and prevent this break-up. He gave them all manner of assurances about allowing slavery to go on; he even said that he was prepared to make it (where it existed) a part of the constitution which would give it permanence. In fact he was prepared to go almost any length for peace, but one thing he would not agree to and that was the break-up of the Union. He denied absolutely the right of any State to withdraw from the Union.

Lincoln's attempts to avoid Civil War failed. The South had decided to break away and eleven States did so, while some other border States also sympathised with

them. The seceding States called themselves the "Confederate States" and elected their own president, Jefferson Davis. In April, 1861, the Civil War began and it lasted for four weary years during which many a brother fought against his brother and many a friend against a friend. Huge armies grew up as the war continued. The North had many advantages; it had a much bigger population and greater wealth. Being a manufacturing and industrial area its resources were far greater and it had more railways. But the South had the better soldiers and generals, especially General Lee, and all the early victories went to the South. But ultimately the South was worn out. The Northern navy cut off the South completely from its market in Europe and cotton and tobacco could not be exported. This crippled the South but it also had a disastrous result on Lancashire where many mills had to stop working because there was no cotton. There was great distress among the workers thrown out of employment in Lancashire.

English opinion about the war was generally in sympathy with the South, or at any rate the opinion of the wealthier classes was in favour of the South. The radical elements favoured the North.

Slavery was not the principal cause of the Civil War. As I have told you, to the last, Lincoln gave assurances that he would respect slavery wherever it existed. The real trouble arose from the different and somewhat conflicting economic interests of the North and South, and finally Lincoln fought to preserve the Union. Even after war had begun Lincoln made no clear pronouncement about slavery as he was afraid of initiating many people in the North who were in favour of it as well the border States. As the war went on he became more definite. He proposed first that Congress should free the slaves after giving compensation to the owners. Later he gave up this idea of compensation, and finally in September, 1862, he issued the Proclamation of Emancipation in which it was declared that the slaves

in all the States in rebellion against the government should be free on and after the first January, 1863. The principal reason for issuing this proclamation was probably the desire to weaken the South in the war. It resulted in four million slaves being freed, and it was no doubt hoped that these would create trouble in the Confederate States.

The Civil War ended in 1865 after the South was thoroughly exhausted. War at any time is a terrible affair but Civil War is often more horrible still. The burden of four years of this awful struggle fell most of all on the president, Lincoln, and the result was largely due to his cool determination to persevere in spite of all disappointments and disasters. He was out not only to win, but to do so with as little ill-will as possible, so that the Union for which he was fighting might be a real union of hearts and not a forced one. So having won the war he set out to be generous to the defeated South. But within a few days a crank shot him dead.

Abraham Lincoln is one of the greatest of American heroes. He has also taken his place among the world's great men. His beginnings were quite humble; he had little schooling, such education as he had was mostly his own work, and yet he grew up a great statesman and a great orator and steered his country through a great crisis.

After Lincoln's death the American Congress was not so generous to the Southern Whites as he might have been. These Southern Whites were penalised in some ways and many were disfranchised, that is, their votes were taken away. On the other hand the Negroes were given full rights as citizens and this was made part of the American constitution. It was also laid down that no State could disfranchise a man on account of his race, colour or previous slavery.

The Negroes were now legally free and had the vote. But this did them little good for their economic status remained the same. All the freed Negroes were

wholly without property and it became a problem what to do with them. Some migrated to the northern towns but most of them remained where they were as much under the thumb of their old white masters in the South as ever. They worked as wage labourers in the old plantations on such wages as the white employers chose to give them. The Southern Whites also organised themselves to keep down the Negroes in every way by terrorism. An extraordinary semi-secret organisation, called the *Ku Klux Klan*, was formed and its members went about in masks terrorising the Negroes and preventing them from even voting at the elections.

During the last half century the Negroes have made some progress. Many own property and they have some fine educational institutions. But still they are very definitely the subject race. There are about twelve millions of them in the United States, just about ten per cent of the total population. Wherever they are in small numbers they are tolerated, as in parts of the North, but as soon as their numbers increase they are heavily sat upon and made to feel that they are little better than the slaves of old. Everywhere they are segregated and kept apart from the whites, in hotels, restaurants, churches, colleges, parks, bathing beaches, trams, and even in stores! In railways they have to travel in special carriages called "Jim Crow cars". Marriage between the White and the Negro is forbidden by law. Indeed there are all manner of strange laws. A law passed by the State of Virginia as recently as 1926 prohibited White and coloured persons from sitting on the same floor!

Sometimes there are terrible race riots between the Whites and the Negroes. Frequently in the south there are horrible cases of lynching, that is when a mob gets hold of a person it suspects of some offence and kills him. Cases have occurred in recent years of Negroes being burned at the stake by white mobs.

All over America and especially in the Southern States the lot of the Negro is very hard still. Often

when labour is scarce innocent Negroes, in some states in the south, are sent to jail on some trumped up charge, and the convict labour is leased out to private contractors. This is bad enough, but the conditions accompanying it are shocking. So we see that legal freedom does not amount to very much after all!

In one thing, however, the Negroes have temporarily conquered the western world and that is their 'jazz' music!

Have you read or heard of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*? This book is about the old slave Negroes in the Southern States and gives their sad story. It came out ten years before the Civil War and had great influence in rousing the American people against slavery.

THE INVISIBLE EMPIRE OF AMERICA

February 28, 1933

The Civil War took a terrible toll of young men's lives in America and it left a heavy burden of debt. But the country was young and full of energy, and its growth continued. It had tremendous natural resources and was especially rich in minerals. The three articles which form the basis of modern industry and civilization were there in abundance—coal, iron and petroleum. There was plenty of water power from which electric power could be produced; the Niagara Falls is one instance of this which will come to your mind. It was a huge country with a relatively small population, and there was plenty of elbow room for everybody. Thus it had every advantage to develop as a great manufacturing and industrial country and it began to do so at a rapid pace. By the eighties of the nineteenth century American industry began to compete in foreign market with British industry, America and Germany put an end then to the easy supremacy which Britain had had for a hundred years in foreign trade.

Immigrants poured into the country. They were all kinds of people from Europe: Germans, Scandinavians, Irish, Italians, Jews, Poles; many were driven by political terrorism at home, and many in search of better living conditions. Over-crowded Europe poured out its surplus population to America. It was an extraordinary jumble of races, nationalities, languages, religions. In Europe they had all lived apart, each in its own little world, full of hatreds and animosities against the others; here they were known together in a new atmosphere where the old hates did not seem to

count for much. A uniform system of compulsory education soon rubbed off their national corners and the American type began to grow out of this hotch-potch of races. The old Anglo-Saxon stock still considered itself the aristocrats; they were the social leaders. Next to it and not far from it came the races from Northern Europe. The people from South Europe, especially from Italy, were looked down upon by these northern Europeans and called, rather contemptuously, 'Dagos'. The Negroes of course were quite apart. They were at the bottom of the scale and they did not mix with any of the white races. On the western coast there were some Chinese and Japanese and Indians who had come when the demand for labour there was great. These Asiatic races also kept apart from the others.

The effect of the widespread net of railways and telegraphs was to knit together this huge country. This would have been impossible in the old days when it took weeks and months to travel from one coast to another. In the past we have seen that there were often great empires in Asia and Europe. But these could not be closely knit together because of the difficulties of communications and transport. Different parts of the empire would be practically independent, leading their own separate lives, except that they acknowledged the supremacy of the emperor and paid tribute to him. They were loose associations of different countries under one head. There was no common outlook about them. The United States, however, because of railways and other methods of communication, as well as a uniform education, developed this common outlook amongst its different races. The races were gradually assimilated to a common stock. The process is by no means complete; it is still going on. There is no other instance in history of assimilation on such a large scale.

The United States tried to keep away from European entanglements and the intrigues of European powers. And they wanted Europe to keep away from America, both North and South. I have told you

already of the *Monroe Doctrine*, the rule which President Monroe of the United States laid down when some European powers—the 'Holy Alliance'—wanted to interfere in South America to preserve Spain's Empire. Monroe declared that the United States could not tolerate any armed intervention in the whole of America by any European power. This declaration saved the young South American republics from Europe. It almost led to war with England once, but America has successfully stuck to this policy for more than a hundred years now.

South America was very different from the North, and a hundred years have not lessened the differences. Canada in the North is becoming more and more like the United States, but not so the southern republics. As I told you once these republics of South America, and you include Mexico among them too although it is in North America, are Latin republics. The frontier of the United States and Mexico divides two different peoples and cultures. South of it, across the thin band of Central America, and all over the great continent of South America, Spanish and Portuguese are the languages of the people. Spanish is really predominant as Portuguese is, I believe, only spoken in Brazil. Because of South America Spanish is to-day one of the great world languages. Latin America still looks to Spain for cultural inspiration. Racial differences do not count there for very much as they do in the United States and Canada. Intermarriages between the Spanish stock and the original population, the Red Indians, and also to some extent the Negroes, have produced a mixed race.

In spite of a hundred years of freedom, these Latin republics of the South refuse to settle down. Periodically they have revolutions and military dictatorships and it is not easy to follow the course of their ever-changing politics and governments. The three leading countries of South America are Argentine, Brazil and Chile—the A, B, C countries they are called from the first letters

of their names. Mexico in North America is a leading Latin-American country.

The United States prevented interference in Latin America from Europe by means of the Monroe Doctrine. But as they grew wealthy they began to look outside for fresh fields for expansion. Naturally their eyes first fell on Latin America. They did not attempt to take possession of any of these countries by force in the old way of building up empires. They sent their goods there and captured their markets. They also invested their capital in railways, mines and other undertakings in the South; they lent money to governments and sometimes to warring factions at time of revolution. By "they" I mean American capitalists and bankers, but behind them and supporting them was the American government. Gradually these bankers controlled, through the money they had lent or invested, many of the smaller South and Central American governments. The bankers could even bring about revolutions by advancing money or arms to one party and not to another. Behind the bankers and capitalists was the great North American government, so what could the small and weak South American countries do? Sometimes the United States government actually sent troops to help one party in a state, on the pretext of maintaining order.

In this way the American capitalists gained effective control of these smaller countries of the South and ran their banks, railways and mines, and exploited them to their own advantage. Even in the larger countries of Latin America they had great influence because of their investments and money control. That is to say the United States annexed the wealth, or a great part of it, of these countries. Now this is worth noting as it is a new kind of empire, the modern type of empire. It is an invisible empire, an economic empire, which exploits and dominates without any obvious outward signs of empire. The South American republics are politically and internationally free and

independent. On the map they are huge countries and there is nothing to show that they are not free in any way. And yet most of them are dominated completely by the United States.

We have seen in our glimpses of history imperialism of various kinds in different ages. Right at the beginning the victory of one people over another in war meant that the victors could do what they liked with conquered land and people. They annexed both the land and its inhabitants, that is to say the conquered people became slaves. This was the ordinary custom. In the Bible one reads of the Jews being taken away into captivity, because they were defeated in war by the Babylonians, and there are many other instances. Gradually this gave place to another type of imperialism, when only the land was annexed and the people were not made slaves. It was no doubt discovered that it was easier to make money out of them by taxation and other methods of exploitation. Most of us still think of empires of this kind, like the British in India, and we imagine that if the British were not in actual political control of India, India would be free. But this type of empire is already passing away, and giving place to a more advanced and perfected type. This latest kind of empire does not annex even the land; it only annexes the wealth or the wealth producing elements in the country. By doing so it can exploit the country fully to its own advantage and can largely control it, and at the same time has to shoulder no responsibility for governing and repressing that country. In effect both the land and the people living there are dominated and largely controlled with the least amount of trouble.

In this way imperialism has perfected itself in the course of time, and the modern type of empire is the invisible economic empire. When slavery was abolished and later when the feudal type of serfdom went, it was thought that men would be free. Soon, however, it was found that men were still exploited and dominated by those who controlled the money power. From slaves

and serfs, men became wage-slaves; freedom for them was still far off. So also in the case of countries. People imagine that the only trouble is the political domination of one country by another, and if this was removed freedom would automatically come. But that is not so obvious as we can see politically free countries entirely under the thumb of others because of economic domination. The British Empire in India is obvious and visible enough. Britain has political control over India. Side by side with this visible empire, and as a necessary part of it, Britain has economic control over India. It is quite possible that Britain's visible empire over India might go before long, and yet the economic control might remain as an invisible empire. If that happens it means that the exploitation of India by Britain is continuing.

Economic imperialism is the least troublesome form of domination for the dominating power. It does not give rise to so much resentment as political domination because many people do not notice it. But when the pinch is felt people begin to appreciate its workings and resent it. In Latin America now there is not much love for the United States and many efforts have been made to create a block of Latin American nations to oppose the dominance of North America. They are not likely to do much till they get over their habit of frequent palace revolutions and mutual quarrels.

The visible empire of the United States extends to the Philippines Islands. I have told you in a previous letter how America got possession of them after a war with Spain. This war began in 1898 over the island of Cuba in the Atlantic. Cuba became independent but in name only. Both Cuba and Haiti are dominated by America.

About a dozen years ago the Panama Canal was opened. This is in the narrow strip of Central America and connects the Atlantic with the Pacific Ocean. It was designed more than fifty years ago by Ferdinand de Lesseps, the man who made the Suez Canal. But

he got into trouble and Americans made the canal. They had great difficulties with malaria and yellow fever but they set out to put an end to these diseases there and they succeeded. They removed all the sources which bred malarial mosquitoes and other carriers of disease and made the canal zone quite healthy. The canal is situated in a tiny Republic of Panama but the United States control it as well as the little republic. To America the canal is a great boon as otherwise ships had to go all the way round South America. Still the importance of the Panama Canal is not so great as that of the Suez Canal.

So the United States went on growing stronger and wealthier and producing, among other things, millionaires and sky-scrappers. They caught up to Europe in many ways and passed it. Industrially they became the leading nation of the world, and the standard of life of their workers became higher than anywhere else. Because of this prosperity, as in England in the nineteenth century, socialistic and other radical theories had little support. American labour, with some exceptions, was most moderate and conservative. It was relatively well paid; why should it risk present comfort for a doubtful betterment? It consisted chiefly of Italians and other 'Dagos' as they were contemptuously called. They were weak and disorganised and were looked down upon. Even the better paid skilled workers considered themselves a class apart from these 'Dagos'.

In American politics two parties grew up—the Republican and the Democratic. As in England, and even more so than in England, they represented the same rich classes and there was little difference of principle between them. It was again a case of Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

So matters stood when the World War came and ultimately sucked America into the whirlpool of strife.

SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS OF CONFLICT BETWEEN IRELAND AND ENGLAND

March 4, 1933

Let us cross the Atlantic again and go back to the old world. The first land that a traveller by car or air sees is that of Ireland; let us therefore make this our first stop. This green and beautiful island dips into the Atlantic Ocean on the far west of Europe. It is a small island, lying away from the main currents of world history; but little as it is, it is full of romance and for centuries past it has shown invincible courage and spirit of sacrifice in the struggle for national freedom. Ireland has put up an amazing record of perseverance in this struggle against a powerful neighbour. The quarrel began over seven hundred and fifty years ago and it is not settled yet! We have seen British imperialism in action in India, China and elsewhere. But Ireland has had to bear the brunt of it from the earliest days. Yet she has never willingly submitted to it and almost every generation has seen a rebellion against England. The bravest of her sons have died fighting for freedom or been executed by the English authorities. Vast numbers of Irishmen have left the home that they loved so passionately and emigrated to foreign countries. Many joined foreign armies fighting England, so that thus they might have a chance of pitting their strength against the country which was dominating and oppressing their home land. The exiles of Ireland spread out in many distant countries and wherever they went they carried a bit of Ireland in their hearts.

Unhappy individuals and oppressed and struggling countries, all those who are dissatisfied and have little joy in the present, have a way of looking back to the

past and searching for consolation in it. They magnify this past and find comfort in thinking of bygone greatness. When the present is full of gloom, the past becomes a haven of refuge giving relief and inspiration. Old grievances also rankle and are not forgotten. This ever looking backward is not a sign of health in a nation. Healthy people and healthy countries act in the present and look to the future. But a person or nation which is not free cannot be healthy and so it is natural that he or it should look back and live partly in the past.

So Ireland lives in the past still and Irish people treasure the memory of her old days when she was free, and remember vividly her many struggles for freedom and her old grievances. They look back, fourteen hundred years ago, to the sixth century after Christ, when Ireland was a centre of learning for Western Europe and drew students from afar. The Roman empire had fallen and Vandals and Huns had crushed Roman civilization. In those days, it is said, Ireland was one of the places which kept the lamp of culture burning till a fresh revival of culture took place in Europe. Christianity had come early to Ireland. Ireland's patron saint, St. Patrick, is supposed to have brought it. It was from Ireland that it spread to the north of England. In Ireland many monasteries were founded and, like the old *āśhrāms* in India and the Buddhist monasteries, these became centres of learning, where teaching often took place in the open air. From these monasteries went out missionaries to Northern and Western Europe to preach the new religion of Christianity to the heathen. Beautiful manuscripts were written and illuminated by some of the monks in the Irish monasteries. There is kept in Dublin now one such beautiful manuscript book called the *Book of Kells*, probably written about twelve hundred years ago.

This period of two or three hundred years, from the sixth century onwards, is looked upon by so many Irishmen as a kind of Golden Age of Ireland when Gaelic culture was at its height. Probably the distance in time

lends an enchantment to these old days and make them seem greater than they actually were. Ireland was split up among many tribes then and these tribes were continually fighting each other. The weakness of Ireland, as of India, was mutual strife. Then came the Danes and Norsemen and, as in England and France, harried the Irish and took possession of large territories. Early in the eleventh century an Irish king Brian Boruma, who became famous, defeated the Danes and united Ireland for a while, but the country split up again after his death.

You will remember that the Normans conquered England under William the conqueror in the eleventh century. A hundred years later these Anglo-Normans invaded Ireland and the part they conquered was called the "Pale", from which probably has come the common expression "beyond the pale", meaning outside a privileged circle or a social group, like an outcaste. This Anglo-Norman invasion in 1169 hit the old Gaelic civilization hard, and it was the beginning of almost continuous war with the Irish tribes. These wars, which lasted for hundred of years, were barbarous and cruel in the extreme. The English (as the Anglo-Normans might be called now) always looked down upon the Irish as a kind of semi-savage race. There was the difference of race, the English being Anglo-Saxons, the Irish Celts; later came the difference in religion, the English and Scotch becoming Protestants and the Irish remaining faithful to Roman Catholicism. So these Anglo-Irish wars had all the bitterness of racial and religious wars. The English deliberately prevented the two races from mixing. A law was even passed (a statute of Kilkenny) prohibiting intermarriages between the English and Irish.

Rebellion followed rebellion in Ireland and each was crushed with great cruelty. The Irish naturally hated their foreign rulers and oppressors and rose in rebellion whenever they had the chance and even without it. 'England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity'

is an old saying, and both for political and religious reasons Ireland often sided with England's enemies like France and Spain. This enraged the English greatly and gave them a feeling of being stabbed in the back, and they retaliated with all manner of atrocities.

In Queen Elizabeth's time (the sixteenth century) it was decided to break the resistance of the rebellious Irish natives by planting English landlords among them to keep them down. So land was confiscated and the old Irish land-owning classes had to give place to foreigners. Thus Ireland became practically a peasant nation with foreign landlords. And these landlords remained foreign to the Irish people even after the lapse of hundreds of years.

Queen Elizabeth's successor, James I of England, went forward another step in this attempt to break the spirit of the Irish. He decided to have a regular plantation of foreign colonists in Ireland, and for this purpose nearly all the land in the six counties of Ulster in the north of Ireland was confiscated by the king. There was land to be had for nothing and crowds of adventurers came over from England and Scotland. Many of these English and Scottish people got land and settled down as farmers. The city of London was also asked to help in this colonizing process, and it formed a special society for the new "Plantation of Ulster". It was because of this that the city of Derry in the north became known as Londonderry.

So Ulster became a patch of Britain in Ireland and it is not surprising to find that this was bitterly resented by the Irish. The new Ulsterites on their part hated the Irish and looked down upon them. What an amazingly clever imperialist move this was of England to break up Ireland into two hostile camps! The Ulster problem still remains unsolved after over three hundred years.

Soon after this plantation of Ulster there was Civil War in England between Charles I and Parliament. On the side of Parliament were the Puritans and Protestants,

and Catholic Ireland naturally sided with the king, Ulster backing Parliament. The Irish were afraid, not without reason, that the Puritans would crush Catholicism and they rose in a great rebellion in 1641. This rebellion and its crushing were even more ferocious and barbarous than the earlier ones. The Irish Catholics had cruelly massacred Protestants. Cromwell's revenge was terrible. There were many massacres of the Irish and especially of Catholic priests, and Cromwell is still remembered with bitterness in Ireland.

In spite of all this terrorism and cruelty, a generation later there was again rebellion and Civil War, of which two incidents stand out, the sieges of Londonderry and Limerick. Protestant Londonderry in Ulster was besieged by the Catholic Irish in 1688 and it was most gallantly defended though the defenders had no food left and were starving. English ships at last brought food and relief after four months of siege and privation. In Limerick in 1690 it was the other way about; the Catholic Irish were besieged by the English. The hero of this siege was Patrick Sarsfield who defended Limerick magnificently against great odds. Even Irish women fought in this defence, and Gaelic songs about Sarsfield and his gallant band are still sung in the countryside in Ireland. Sarsfield ultimately gave up Limerick but only after an honourable treaty with the British. One of the clauses of this treaty of Limerick was that the Irish Catholics would be given full civil and religious liberty.

This treaty of Limerick was broken by the English, or rather by the English land-owning families in Ireland. These Protestant families controlled a subordinate parliament in Dublin and, in spite of the solemn promise made at Limerick, they refused to give civil or religious liberty to the Catholics. Instead of this they passed special laws penalising Catholics and deliberately ruining the Irish woollen trade. Their tenantry was pitilessly crushed and evicted from their lands. Remember that this was done by a handful of foreign

Protestant landlords against the vast majority of the population which was Catholic, and most of which formed the tenantry. But all power was in the hands of these English landlords, and these landlords lived away from their estates and left their tenantry to the cruel rapacity of their agents and rent collectors.

The story of Limerick is an old one, but the bitterness and anger that the breaking of a solemn word gave rise to have not subsided yet, and even to-day Limerick stands foremost in an Irish nationalist's mind in the record of English perfidy in Ireland. At that time this breach of a covenant, and religious intolerance and repression, and the cruelty of the landlords drove large numbers of the Irish to other countries. The pick of Irish youth went abroad and offered their services to any country that was fighting England. Wherever there was fighting against England, these Irishmen were sure to be found!

Jonathan Swift, the author of *Gulliver's Travels*, lived during this period (he lived from 1667 to 1745) and something of his anger against the English can be gathered from his advice to his Irish countrymen: "Burn everything English *except* their coal!" More bitter still is the epitaph on his tomb in St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin. This epitaph was very probably written by himself:

Here lies the body of
Jonathan Swift
for thirty years dean
of this cathedral,
where savage indignation can
no longer gnaw his heart.
Go, traveller, and
imitate, if you can, one who
played a man's part in defence
of Liberty.

In 1774 the American War of Independence broke out and British troops had to be sent across the Atlantic. For a change, Ireland had practically no British troops and there was talk of a French invasion, for France had

also declared war against England. So both Irish Catholics and Protestants raised volunteers for defence. For a while they forgot their old animosities and, co-operating together, discovered their power. England had to face the threat of another rebellion, and fearing that Ireland also might break away, as America was doing, an independent parliament was granted to Ireland. Thus in theory Ireland became independent of England but continued under the same king. But the Irish Parliament was the same old landlord-ridden, narrow assembly, confined to Protestants, which had in the past sat so heavily on the Catholics. Catholics were still penalised in many ways. The only difference was that a better feeling seemed to prevail between the Protestants and Catholics. The leader of this parliament, Henry Grattan, himself a Protestant, wanted to do away with Catholic disabilities. He succeeded in doing very little.

Meanwhile the French Revolution took place and this led to great hopes in Ireland. Curiously enough, this was welcomed by both Catholic and Protestant, who were gradually drawing closer to each other. An organisation, called the "United Irishmen," was started to bring them together and emancipate the Catholics. This "United Irishmen" was not approved of by the government and was crushed. So the inevitable and periodic rebellion came in 1798. This was not a religious fight between Ulster and the rest of the country as some of the old rebellions had been; it was a national rising in which to some extent both joined. The rising was crushed by England and the Irish hero of it, Wolfe Tone, was executed as a traitor.

Thus it was obvious that the granting of an independent parliament to Ireland had made little difference to the Irish people. The English Parliament at the time was itself a narrow, corrupt affair elected by pocket boroughs and the like, and controlled by a small land-owning class and a few of the richer merchants. The Irish Parliament had all these evils and

in addition was confined to a handful of Protestants in a Catholic country. Even so the British government decided to put an end to this Irish Parliament and to join Ireland to Britain. This was strongly opposed in Ireland but heavy bribery of the members of the Dublin Parliament induced them to vote their own parliament out of existence! The Act of Union was passed in 1800, and thus ended Grattan's short-lived parliament, and instead some Irish members were sent to the British parliament in London.

The suppression of this corrupt Irish Parliament was probably no great loss, except in so far as it might have developed later into something better. But this Act of Union did one real harm and perhaps it was intended to do this. It succeeded in putting an end to the movement for unity between the north and the south, Protestant and Catholic. Protestant Ulster looked away again from the rest of Ireland and the two parts grew estranged from each other. Another difference had crept in between the two. Ulster, like England, took to modern industry; the rest of Ireland remained agricultural and even agriculture did not flourish because of the land system and the continuous emigration. Thus while the north became industrialised, the south and east, and especially the west, remained industrially backward and medieval.

The Act of Union did not pass off without a rising in protest of it. The leader of this abortive rising was Robert Emmett, a brilliant young man, who, as so many of his countrymen before him, ended his days on the scaffold.

Irish members went to the British House of Commons. But not Catholics. Catholics were not permitted to do so either in England or Ireland. In 1829 these disabilities were removed and Catholics could sit in the British Parliament. The Irish leader, Daniel O'Connell, was successful in getting these disabilities removed and was therefore called the "Liberator". Another change that took place gradually was the

widening of the franchise which gave the vote to more and more persons. Ireland now being joined on to Britain the same laws applied to both. Thus the great Reform Bill of 1832 applied to Ireland as well as to Britain. So also the later franchise bill, and in this way the type of Irish member in the British House of Commons began to change. From being a representative of the landlords, he became a spokesman of the Catholic peasantry and of Irish nationalism.

In their poverty the landlord-ridden and rack-rented Irish tenantry had made the potato their chief article of diet. They practically lived on potatoes and, like the Indian peasantry to-day, they had no reserves; there was nothing to fall back upon. They lived on the verge of existence and had no powers of resistance left. 'In 1864 the potato crop failed and this resulted in a great famine.' But despite the famine the landlords turned out their tenantry for non-payment of rent. Large numbers of Irishmen left their homes for America and other countries and Ireland became almost a depopulated land. Many of her fields were tilled no longer and became pasture lands.'

This process of conversion of agricultural land that was ploughed into pasture land for sheep was continuous in Ireland for over a hundred years and right up to our times. The principal reason for this was the growth of factories in England for the manufacture of woollen textiles. The more machinery was used the greater the production and the more wool was required. It was more profitable for the landlords in Ireland to have pasture lands for sheep rather than tilled fields with men working in them. Pasture lands require very few workers just a handful to look after the sheep. The agricultural workers thus became superfluous and were turned out by the landlords. Thus Ireland, which was in reality thinly populated, always had 'superfluous' workers, and the process of depopulation went on. Ireland became just an area to supply raw material to "industrial" England. 'This old process of converting

tilled land into pastures has now been reversed, and again the plough is getting back to its own. Curiously enough this has resulted from a trade war which has been going on between Ireland and England since last year, 1932.⁷

The land question, the troubles of the unhappy tenants under absentee landlordism, was the chief question in Ireland for a great part of the nineteenth century. Ultimately the British government decided to remove these landlords completely by buying up their land compulsorily and then giving it to their tenants. The landlords of course did not suffer at all. They got their full price from the government. The tenants got the land but with the burden of the price attached to it. They were made to pay this price not in a lump sum but by small annual payments. These annuities have not yet been wholly paid off and there is an argument about them going on now between Ireland and England.

After the national rising of 1798 there was no big rebellion in Ireland for over a hundred years. The nineteenth century, unlike previous centuries, was free from this periodical occurrence in Ireland. But this was not due to a feeling of contentment. There was exhaustion of the last rising and of the great famine, and the depopulation. To some extent, in the latter half of the century, people's minds were also turned to the British Parliament in the hope that the Irish members there might be able to do something. But still some Irishmen wanted to keep alive the tradition of a periodical rising. Only so, they thought, could the spirit and soul of Ireland remain fresh and unsullied. (The Irish immigrants in America started a society there for Irish independence. These people, 'Fenians' they were called, organised petty risings in Ireland. But the masses were not touched and the Fenians were soon crushed.)

I must end this letter now because it is long enough. But Ireland's story is not over yet.

HOME RULE AND SINN FEIN IN IRELAND

March 9, 1933

After so many armed insurrections, and because of famine and other calamities, Ireland was a little weary of this method of trying to gain freedom. In the second half of the nineteenth century, as the franchise for the British Parliament widened, many nationalist Irish members were returned to the House of Commons. People began to hope that perhaps these people might be able to do something for Irish freedom; they began to look to parliamentary action instead of the old time method of armed rebellion.

The rift between Ulster in the north and the rest of Ireland had widened again. The racial and religious differences continued and, in addition to these, economic differences became more marked. Ulster, like England and Scotland, was industrialised and big factory production was taking place. The rest of the country was agricultural and medieval and depopulated and poor. England's old policy of dividing Ireland into two parts had succeeded only too well; so well indeed that England herself could not get over the difficulty when she tried to in later years. Ulster became the greatest obstacle to Irish freedom. In a free Ireland rich Protestant Ulster was afraid of being submerged in a poor Catholic Ireland.

In the British Parliament and in Ireland two new words came to be used, the words *Home Rule*. Ireland's demand was now called Home Rule. This was much less than, and very different from, the seven-hundred-year old demand for independence. It meant a

subordinate Irish parliament dealing with local affairs, the British Parliament continuing to control certain important matters. Many Irishmen did not agree with this watering down of the old demand for independence. But the country was weary of rebellion and strife and refused to take part in several abortive attempts at insurrection.

One of the Irish members in the British House of Commons was Charles Stewart Parnell. Realising that neither of the British parties, the Conservatives and the Liberals, paid the slightest attention to Ireland, he decided to make it difficult for them to carry on with their polite parliamentary game. Together with some other Irish members he started obstructing parliamentary business by long speeches and other tactics merely meant to delay. English people were very annoyed with these tactics; they said they were not parliamentary, not gentlemanly. But Parnell was not affected by these criticisms. He had not come to parliament to play the polite English parliamentary game in accordance with the rules of the Englishman's making. He had come to serve Ireland and if he could not do so in the normal way he considered himself fully justified in adopting abnormal methods. In any event, he succeeded in drawing attention to Ireland.

Parnell became the leader of the Irish Home Rule Party in the British House of Commons and this party became a nuisance to the two old British parties. When these two parties were more or less evenly watched, the Irish Home Rulers could make a difference either way. In this way the Irish question was always kept in the forefront. Gladstone at last agreed to Home Rule for Ireland and he brought forward a Home Rule Bill in the House of Commons in 1886. This was a very mild measure of self-government but even so it created a storm. The Conservatives were of course wholly opposed to it. Even Gladstone's party, the Liberals, did not like it and the party split in two, one part actually joining the conservatives, who came to be called

"Unionists" because they stood for union with Ireland. The Home Rule Bill fell and with it fell Gladstone.

Seven years later, in 1893, Gladstone, then eighty-four years of age, again became prime minister. He brought forward his second Home Rule Bill and this was just passed by a narrow majority in the House of Commons. But all bills have also to pass the House of Lords before they can become law and the House of Lords was full of conservatives and reactionaries. It was not elected. It was a hereditary assembly of big landowners with some bishops added. This House of Lords rejected the Home Rule Bill which the Commons had passed.

So parliamentary efforts also had failed to bring what Ireland wanted. Still the Irish Nationalist Party (or the Home Rule Party) continued to work in Parliament in the hope that they might succeed and, on the whole, they had the confidence of the people of Ireland. But there were also many who lost faith in these methods and in the British Parliament. Many Irishmen became somewhat disgusted with politics, in the narrow sense of the word, and devoted themselves to cultural and economic activities. (In the early years of the twentieth century there was a cultural renaissance in Ireland and, in particular, an effort to revive Gaelic, the old language of the country, which still flourished in the western country districts. This Celtic language had a rich literature but centuries of English domination had driven it away from the towns and it was gradually disappearing. Irish nationalists felt that Ireland could only retain her soul and her old culture through the medium of their own language and so they worked hard to dig it out of the western villages and make it a living language.) A Gaelic League was founded for the purpose. Everywhere, and especially in all subject countries, a national movement bases itself on the language of the country. No movement based on a foreign language can reach the masses or take root. In Ireland English was hardly a foreign language. It was

almost universally known and spoken; certainly it was better known than Gaelic. And yet Irish nationalists considered it essential to revive Gaelic so that they might not lose touch with their old culture.

There was a feeling in Ireland then that strength came from within and not from outside. There was disillusion at purely political activities in Parliament, and attempts were therefore made to build up the nation on a firmer basis. The new Ireland of the early years of the twentieth century was different from the old, and the renaissance made itself felt in many directions. In the literary and the cultural, as I have mentioned above, as also in the economic, where efforts were made, with success, to organise the farmers on a co-operative basis.

But behind all this was the craving for freedom and although the Irish Nationalist Party in the British Parliament seemed to hold the confidence of the Irish people, faith in them was shaking. They began to be looked upon as just politicians fond of making speeches and powerless to do anything. The old Fenians and other believers in independence had of course never believed in these parliamentarians and their home rule. But now the new and young Ireland also began to look away from Parliament. Ideas of self-help were in the air; why not apply them to politics? Again, ideas of armed rebellion began to play about in people's minds. But a new turn was given to this desire for action. A young Irishman, Arthur Griffith, began to preach a new policy which came to be known as *Sinn Fein* (which is pronounced as Shin Fen). These words are usually translated as "Ourselves alone", but the correct translation is "we ourselves".

These words give an idea of the policy behind them. The Sinn Feiners wanted Ireland to rely on itself and not look for succour or charity from England; they wanted to build up the nation's strength from inside. They supported the Gaelic movement and the cultural revival. In politics they disapproved of the futile

parliamentary action that was going on and expected nothing from it. On the other hand they did not consider armed rebellion feasible. They preached 'direct action', as opposed to parliamentary action, by means of a kind of non-cooperation with the British government. Arthur Griffith gave the instance of Hungary, where a policy of passive resistance had succeeded a generation earlier, and pleaded for the adoption of a similar policy to force Ireland's hands.

During the last thirteen years we have had a great deal to do with various forms of non-cooperation in India and it is interesting to compare this Irish precedent with ours. As all the world knows the basis of our movement has been non-violence. In Ireland there was no such foundation or background; and yet the strength of the proposed non-cooperation lay in a peaceful passive resistance. The struggle was to be essentially a peaceful one.

Sinn Fein ideas spread slowly among the Youth of Ireland. Ireland did not suddenly catch fire because of them. There were many people still who hoped from Parliament, especially as the Liberal Party had come back again in 1906 with a huge majority. In spite of this majority in the House of Commons, the Liberals had to face a permanent Conservative and Unionist majority in the House of Lords, and soon there was conflict between the two. The result of this conflict was to curb the power of the Lords. In money matters their interference could be got over by the Commons by passing the bill objected to by the Lords in three successive sessions. In this way, by the Parliament Act of 1911, the Liberals took out the teeth of the House of Lords. But still the Lords remained with a great deal of power to hold up and interfere.

Having provided for the inevitable resistance of the Lords, the Liberals brought forward the third Home Rule Bill and this was passed by the Commons in 1913. As expected the Lords threw it out, and then the Commons went through the laborious process of passing

it in three sessions. It became law in 1914 and it applied to the whole of Ireland, including Ulster.

Ireland seemed to have got Home Rule at last, but —there were many buts! While Parliament had debated Home Rule in 1912 and 1913 strange things were happening in the north of Ireland. The leaders of Ulster had proclaimed that they would not accept it and would resist it even if it became law. They talked of rebellion and prepared for it. It was even stated that they would not hesitate to ask the help of a foreign power, meaning Germany, to fight Home Rule! This was open and unabated treason. More interesting still, the leaders of the Conservative party in England blessed this rebellious movement and many helped it. Money from the rich conservative classes poured into Ulster. It was obvious that the so-called 'upper classes' or governing class were generally with Ulster and so were many of the army officers who came from these classes. Arms were smuggled in and volunteers were openly drilled. A provisional government was even formed in Ulster to take charge when the time came. It is interesting to note that one of the leading 'rebels' in Ulster was a prominent conservative member of Parliament, F. E. Smith, who later, as Lord Birkenhead, was Secretary of State for India and held other high offices.

Rebellions are common enough occurrences in history and Ireland especially has had her full share of them. Still these preparations for an Ulster rebellion have a special interest for us as the party at the back of it was the very party which prided itself on its constitutional and conservative character. It was the party which always talked of 'law and order' and was in favour of heavy punishment for those who offended against this law and order. Yet prominent members of this party talked open treason and prepared for armed rebellion, and the rank and file helped with money! It is also interesting to note that this projected rebellion was against the authority of Parliament which was

considering, and which later passed, the Home Rule Bill. Thus the very foundations of democracy were attacked by it, and the old boast of the English people that they believed in the reign of law and in constitutional activity was set at naught.

The Ulster 'rebellion' of 1912—14 tore the veil from these pretensions and high sounding phrases and disclosed the real nature of government and modern democracy. So long as 'law and order' meant that the privileges and interests of the governing class were preserved, law and order were desirable; so long as democracy did not encroach on these privileges and interests, it could be tolerated. But if there was any attack on these privileges then this class would fight. Thus 'law and order' was just a fine phrase meaning to them their own interests. This made it clear that the British government was in effect a class government and not even a majority in Parliament against it would dislodge it easily. If such a majority tried to pass a socialistic law which lessened their privileges, they would rebel against it in spite of democratic principles. It is well to keep this in mind as it applies to all countries and we are apt to forget this reality in a fog of pious phrases and resounding words. There is no essential difference in this respect between the South American republic where revolutions occur frequently and England where there is a stable government. The stability consists in the governing classes having dug themselves in and no other class being strong enough so far to remove them. In 1911 one of their defences, the House of Lords, was weakened, and they took fright and Ulster became the pretext for rebellion.

In India the charmed words 'law and order' are of course with us every day and many times a day. It is well therefore to remember what exactly they mean. We might also remember that one of our mentors, a Secretary of State for India, was a leader of the Ulster rebellion.

So Ulster prepared for rebellion with arms and

volunteers and the government calmly looked on. There were no ordinances promulgated against these preparations! After a while the rest of Ireland started copying Ulster and organizing "National Volunteers", but in order to fight for Home Rule and if necessary against Ulster. So rival armies grew up in Ireland. It is curious to find that the British authorities, who had winked at the arming of the volunteers for the Ulster rebellion, were much more wide awake in suppressing the 'National Volunteers', although these were not against the Home Rule Bill.

A clash between these two sets of volunteers in Ireland seemed inevitable and that meant Civil War. Just then a greater war, the World War, broke out in August, 1914, and everything else sunk into insignificance before it. The Home Rule Act indeed became law, but at the same time it was provided that it must not come into operation before the end of the war! So Home Rule was as far off as ever and much was to happen in Ireland before the end of the war came.

I am bringing up my account of various countries to the outbreak of the World War. We have arrived at this stage in Ireland, and so we must stop for the present. But one thing I must tell you before I finish this letter. The leaders of the Ulster rebellion, instead of being punished for their activities, were rewarded soon after by being made cabinet ministers and holders of high offices under the British government!

BRITAIN SEIZES AND HOLDS ON
TO EGYPT*March 11, 1933*

From America we took a long hop across the Atlantic to Ireland. Let us hop again now to a third continent, Africa, and to another victim of British imperialism, Egypt. In some of my letters to you references were made to Egypt's early history. They were brief and scrappy because of my own ignorance. Even if I knew more about the subject than I do, I could not go back at this stage to the early days again. We have at last almost finished our account of the nineteenth century and are on the threshold of the twentieth, and there we must remain. We cannot be going backwards and forwards all the time! Besides, if I attempted to tell the story of each country's past, would these letters ever end?

Still I would not have you imagine that Egypt's story is more or less of a blank. For Egypt is the Ancient among nations, and carries us back further than any other country, and counts its periods not in paltry centuries, but in thousands of years. Wonderful and awe-inspiring remains still remind us of this remote past. Egypt was the earliest and the greatest field for archæological research, and as stone monuments and other relics were dug out from under the sand, they told a fascinating tale of the days long, long ago where they were young. This process of digging and discovery continues still and adds fresh pages to Egypt's ancient history. We cannot yet say when it begins and how it begins. Already, nearly seven thousand years ago, civilized people lived in the valley of the Nile with a

long record of cultural progress behind them. They wrote in their picture language, the hieroglyphics; they made beautiful pottery and vases, and vessels of gold and copper and ivory and carved alabaster.

Even before Alexander of Macedon conquered Egypt in the fourth century B.C., thirty-one Egyptian dynasties are said to have ruled there. From out of this vast period of four or five thousand years some wonderful figures of men and women stand out, and seem almost alive even to-day—men and women of action, great builders, great dreamers and thinkers, warriors, despots and tyrants, proud and vain rulers, beautiful women. The long succession of Pharaohs passes before us, millennium after millennium. Women have full freedom and are among the rulers. It was a priest-ridden country, and the Egyptian people were always wrapped up in the future and in the other world. The great pyramids, which were built with forced labour and with great cruelty to the workers, were a kind of provision for this future for the Pharaohs. Mummies again were a way of keeping one's body for the future. All this seems rather dark and stern and joyless. And then we come across wigs for men, for they used to shave their heads, and children's toys! There are dolls and balls and little animals with movable limbs, and these toys suddenly make us remember the human side of the old Egyptians, and they seem to come nearer to us through the ages.

In the sixth century B.C. about the time of the Buddha, the Persians conquered Egypt and made it a province of their vast empire, which stretched from the Nile to the Indus. These were the Achaemenid kings whose capital was Persepolis and who tried and failed to subdue Greece, and who were finally defeated by Alexander the Great. Alexander was welcomed almost as a deliverer in Egypt from the harsh rule of the Persians. He left his monument there in the city of Alexandria, which became a famous centre of learning and Greek culture.

You will remember that after Alexander's death his empire was split up amongst his generals and Egypt fell to the lot of Ptolemy. The Ptolemies soon acclimatized themselves and, unlike the Persians, accepted Egyptian customs. They behaved like the Egyptians, and were accepted almost as if they continued the old line of the Pharaohs. Cleopatra was the last of these Ptolemies and with her death Egypt became a province of the Roman Empire a few years before the Christian Era is supposed to begin.

Long before Rome adopted Christianity, Egypt took to it, and the Egyptian Christians were persecuted by the Romans and had to hide in the deserts. Secret monasteries grew up in the deserts, and the Christian world of those days was full of wonderful and mysterious stories of the miracles performed by these hermits. Later, when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, after Constantine had adopted it. These Egyptian Christians tried to revenge themselves by cruel persecutions of the non-Christians, or pagans as they were called, those who professed the old Egyptian religion. Alexandria now became a famous Christian centre of learning, but Christianity in Egypt, now that it was the state religion, became a thing of sects and parties continually quarrelling with each other and fighting for mastery. These bloody feuds became such a nuisance that the people generally were thoroughly fed up with all the Christian sects, and when, in the seventh century, the Arabs came with a new religion, they were welcomed. This was one of the reasons why the Arab conquest of Egypt and North Africa was an easy one. Again the Christians became a persecuted sect and were cruelly repressed.

So Egypt became a province of the Caliph's Empire. The Arabic language and Arabic culture spread rapidly, so much so that the old Egyptian language was superseded. Two hundred years later, in the ninth century, as the Baghdad Caliphate weakened, Egypt became semi-independent under Turkish governors. Three

hundred years later Saladin, the Moslem hero of the Crusades, made himself Sultan of Egypt. Soon after Saladin, one of his successors, brought a large number of Turkish slaves from the regions of the Caucasus and made them his soldiers. These white slaves were called Mamelukes, which means slaves. They had been carefully chosen for the army and were a fine body of men. Within a few years these Mamelukes rebelled and made one of their own number Sultan of Egypt. Thus began the rule of the Mamelukes in Egypt which lasted for two and a half centuries and, in a semi-independent way, for another nearly three hundred years. Thus this body of foreign slaves dominated Egypt for over five hundred years—a remarkable and unique instance in history.

It was not as if the original Mamelukes formed a hereditary caste or class in Egypt. They were continually adding to their numbers by choosing the best of the free slaves belonging to the white races of the Caucasus. These Caucasian races are Aryans and so the Mamelukes were Aryans. These alien people did not thrive on Egyptian soil and their families died out after a few generations. But as fresh Mamelukes were being brought the numbers and especially the strength and vitality of this class was kept up. Thus these people did not form a hereditary class, but none-the-less they formed an aristocracy and a governing class which lasted for a tremendous long time.

Early in the sixteenth century the Turkish Ottoman Sultan of Constantinople conquered Egypt and he hanged the Mameluke Sultan. Egypt became a province of the Ottoman empire but still the Mamelukes remained the governing aristocracy. Later, when the Turks became weak in Europe the Mamelukes did much as they liked in Egypt, although in theory Egypt continued to be part of the Ottoman Empire. When Napoleon came to Egypt at the end of the eighteenth century he met and defeated these Mamelukes. You may remember the story I told you of the Mameluke

Knight who rode up to the French army and, after the fashion of the Middle Ages and the days of chivalry, challenged its leader to single combat!

So we reach the nineteenth century. For the first half of this century Egypt was dominated by Mehemet Ali, and Albanian Turk, who had become governor of the country, or 'Khedive' as these Turkish governors were called. Mehemet Ali is known as the founder of modern Egypt. The first thing he did was to break the power of the Mamelukes by having them massacred treacherously. He also defeated an English army in Egypt and made himself master of the country, just acknowledging the suzerainty of the Turkish Sultan for form's sake. He built up a new Egyptian army drawn from the peasantry (and not the Mamelukes); he built new canals; and he encouraged cotton growing which was to become Egypt's principal industry. He even threatened to take possession of Constantinople itself by driving out his nominal master, but refrained from doing so and merely added Syria to Egypt.

Mehemet Ali died in 1849 at the age of 80. His successors were feeble and extravagant and incompetent folk. But even if they had been better than they were it would have been difficult for them to stand up against the rapacity of international financiers and the greed of European imperialisms. Money was lent by foreigners, especially English and French financiers, to the Khedives at exorbitant rates mostly for their personal use and then warships came to collect the interest when this was not paid in time! It is an extraordinary story of international intrigue, of how financiers and governments work hand in glove with each other in order to despoil and dominate another country. In spite of the incompetence of several Khedives Egypt made considerable progress. Indeed the leading English newspaper, *The Times* said in January, 1876, that "Egypt is a marvellous instance of progress. She has advanced as much in seventy years as other countries in five hundred." But in spite of all this the foreign financiers

insisted on their pound of flesh making it appear that the country was heading for bankruptcy called for foreign intervention. The foreign governments, especially the English and French, were only too eager to intervene. They wanted an excuse, for Egypt was too tempting a morsel to be left to itself, and also Egypt was on the route to India.

Meanwhile the Suez Canal built with forced labour and great inhumanity, had been opened for traffic in 1869. (It may interest you to know that there appears to have been such a canal between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean in the time of the old Egyptian dynasties about 1400 B.C.!) The opening of this Canal immediately brought all the traffic between Europe and Asia and Australia to the Suez, and the importance of Egypt grew still more. For England, with her vital interests in India and the East, the control of the Canal and of Egypt became of paramount importance. The English Prime Minister in 1875, Disraeli, brought off a clever coup by buying up at a very low price all the Suez Canal shares of the insolvent Khedive. This was not only a good investment in itself but it gave a great deal of the control of the Canal to the British government. The rest of Egypt's shares in the Canal went to French financiers, so Egypt had practically no financial control left over the Canal. From these shares the British and the French have drawn enormous dividends, and have at the same time controlled the Canal and had this vital grip on Egypt. Last year (1932) the dividend of the British government alone amounted to £3,500,000 on its original investment of £4,000,000.

It was inevitable that they should try to gain further control of the country, and so in 1879 they started interfering continuously in Egyptian internal affairs, and put their own financial controllers. This was naturally resented by many Egyptians and a nationalist party grew up bent on ridding Egypt of foreign interference. The leader of this was a young soldier, Arabi Pasha, who came from poor working

parents and had joined the Egyptian army as a private. His influence grew and he became minister of War and, as such, he refused to carry out the directions of the English and French controllers. England's answer to this refusal to submit to foreign dictation was war and in 1882 the British fleet bombarded and burnt the city of Alexandria. Having thus proclaimed the superiority of Western civilization, and having also defeated the Egyptian forces on land, the British now took full control of Egypt.

In this way began the British occupation of Egypt. It was, in international law, an extraordinary position. Egypt was a province or a part of the Turkish dominions. England was supposed to be on friendly terms with Turkey and yet she calmly occupied a part of these dominions. She put an agent of hers there. He was the boss of everybody, a kind of grand Mughal, like the Viceroy of India, and even the Khedive and his ministers were powerless before this British agent. The first British agent was a Major Baring, who ruled in Egypt for twenty-five years and became Lord Cromer. Cromer ruled Egypt like a despot. His first concern was the payment of dividends to the foreign financiers and bond-holders. This was done regularly and great praise was forthcoming for Egypt's sound finances. As in India, a measure of administrative efficiency was also brought about. But at the end of the twenty-five years the old Egyptian debt remained what it had been at the beginning. Practically nothing was done for education and Cromer even stopped the starting of a national university. His outlook can be judged from a sentence in a letter of his, written in 1892, to Lord Salisbury who was then prime minister in England: "The Khedive is going to be very Egyptian"! For an Egyptian to behave as an Egyptian should, was an offence in the eyes of Lord Cromer, just as, for an Indian to behave as an Indian should, is frowned upon and punished by the British.

The French did not like this British control of

Egypt; they had got no share out of the loot. Nor did the other European powers like it and, needless to say, the Egyptians did not like it at all. The British government told everybody not to worry as they were only in Egypt for a short while and they would soon leave it. Again and again it was formally and officially declared by the British government that they would evacuate Egypt. This solemn declaration was made about fifty times or more; it is difficult to keep count of it. And yet the British stuck on, and are still there!

In 1904 the British came to an agreement with the French over many matters in dispute. They agreed to let the French have a free hand in Morocco, and in exchange for this the French agreed to recognise the British occupation of Egypt. It was a fair give and take, only Turkey, which was still supposed to be the suzerain power, was not consulted, and of course there was no question of asking the Egyptian people!

Another feature of Egypt during this period was that the Egyptian courts had no power or jurisdiction over foreigners. These courts were not supposed to be good enough, and the foreigners were entitled to be tried by their own courts. So, what are called "extra-territorial" tribunals grew up, with foreign judges and with foreign interests at heart. One of these very foreign judges of the tribunal has written about them: *Leur justice a merveilleusement servie la coalition etrangere qui exploitait le pays**! I believe that the foreign residents of Egypt also escaped most of the taxation. A happy position—not to be taxed, not to be subject to the laws or courts of the country you are living in, and, at the same time to have every facility to exploit that country!

So Britain ruled and exploited Egypt, and her agents and representatives lived with all the pomp and

*Their justice has marvellously served the foreign coalition which exploited the country.

pageantry of autocratic monarchs in their Residencies. Naturally nationalism grew and reform movements took shape. The greatest Egyptian reformer of the nineteenth century was Jamaluddin Afghani, a religious leader who sought to modernise Islam by reconciling it with modern conditions. He preached that all progress could be reconciled with Islam. His attempt to modernise Islam was similar in essence to attempts made in India to modernise Hinduism. These attempts are based on going back to certain basic teachings, and to finding new meanings and interpretations for old customs and dogmas. According to this, modern knowledge becomes a kind of addition to, or commentary upon, the old religious knowledge. This method is of course very different from the scientific method which goes forward boldly without any such previous commitments. However, Jamaluddin's influence was very great not only in Egypt but in the other Arabic countries.

With the growth of foreign trade a new middle class arose in Egypt and this class became the backbone of the new nationalism. Out of this class came Saad Zaghlul Pasha, the greatest of modern Egyptian leaders. Egypt is predominantly a Muslim country, but there are still a considerable number of Copts who are Christians. These Copts are the purest of the old Egyptians. The new middle class had both Muslims and Copts and fortunately there was no antagonism between them. The British tried to create conflict between them but they met with little success. The British also tried to divide the nationalist party. Occasionally they succeeded, as in India, in getting a few of the moderates to co-operate with them. But of this I shall tell you more in some subsequent letter.

This was the position of Egypt when the World War began in August, 1914. Three months later Turkey joined Germany against England and France and their allies. Thereupon England actually decided on annexing Egypt but some difficulties arose and instead

{ a British protectorate over Egypt was proclaimed.

So much for Egypt. The rest of Africa also fell a victim to European imperialism in the second half of the nineteenth century. There was a tremendous rush and the huge continent was divided up among the European powers. Like vultures they fell upon it, sometimes falling out with each other. Few met any checks, but Italy was defeated in Abyssinia in 1896. If you look at a map of Africa now you will find most of it under British or French control and some parts under Belgian, Italian and Portuguese control. The Germans were there also till their defeat in the war. Only two independent states remain, Abyssinia in the East and little Liberia on the west coast. Morocco is under French and Spanish influence.

The story of how these vast territories were taken possession of is long and gruesome. It is by no means over yet. Worse still were the methods adopted to exploit the continent and especially to extract rubber. Many years ago a shock of horror passed through the so-called civilized world at the tales of atrocities committed in the Belgian Congo. The Black Man's Burden has been a terrible one.

Africa, known as the Dark continent, was an almost unknown land, so far as its interior was concerned, till the latter half of the nineteenth century. Many an adventurous and exciting journey across it had to be undertaken before this land of mystery could be put properly on the map. Greatest of its explorers was David Livingstone, a Scottish missionary. For years the continent swallowed him up and the outside world had no news of him. Connected with his name is that of Henry Stanley, a newspaper man and explorer, who went to look for him and found him at last in the heart of the continent.

TURKEY BECOMES THE 'SICK MAN OF EUROPE'

March 14, 1933

From Egypt, across the Mediterranean, to Turkey is a small and natural step. The nineteenth century was to see the progressive crumbling away of the empire of the Ottoman Turks in Europe. The gradual decline had started in the previous century. Perhaps you remember my telling you of the Turkish sieges of Vienna, and of how, for a while, Europe trembled before the sword of the Turks. Pious Christians in the West considered the Turk as the 'Scourge of God' sent to punish Christendom for its sins. But the final repulse of the Turks from the fates of Vienna turned the tide and thenceforward they were on the defensive in Europe. The many nationalities they had subdued in south-east Europe were so many thorns in their side. No attempt was made to assimilate them, and probably this was not possible even if the attempt had been made, and the spirit of nationalism was coming into conflict with the heavy rule of the Turk. In the north-east Tsarist Russia was growing bigger and bigger and always pressing hard on the Turkish dominions. She became the traditional and persistent enemy of the Turks and for nearly two hundred years waged intermittent war against them till both Tsar and Sultan went down almost together and took their empires with them.

The Ottoman empire lasted long enough as empires go. After a long period in Asia Minor it was established in Europe in 1361. Although Constantinople itself did not fall to the Turks till 1453 all the territory round it went to them long before this date. The great city

was saved for a while by the eruption of Timur in Western Asia and his crushing defeat of the Turkish Sultan in 1402 at Angora. But the Turks recovered from this soon. From 1361 to the end of the Ottoman empire in our own time is over five and a half centuries and that is a long time.

And yet the Turk did not fit in at all with the new conditions that were developing in Europe after the end of the Middle Ages. Trade and commerce were growing, production was being organised on a bigger scale in the manufacturing cities of Europe. The Turk felt no attraction for this kind of thing. He was a fine soldier, a hard fighter and disciplinarian, easy-going in his intervals of leisure, but fierce and cruel when roused. Although he settled down in cities and beautified them with fine buildings, he carried something of his old nomadic way about him and fashioned his life accordingly. This way was perhaps the most suitable in the home lands of the Turks but it did not fit in with the new surroundings in Europe or Asia Minor. The Turks refused to adapt themselves to the new surroundings, and so there was a continuous conflict between the two different systems.

The Ottoman empire connected three continents—Europe, Asia, Africa; it covered all the ancient trade routes between East and West. If the Turks had been so inclined and had possessed the necessary capacity for it they could have taken advantage of this favourable position and become a great commercial nation. But they had no such inclination or capacity and they went out of their way to discourage this trade, probably because they did not like to see others profiting by it. It was partly owing to this stopping of the old trade routes that the sea-faring and commercial peoples of Europe felt compelled to search for other routes to the East, and this led to the discoveries of new routes by Columbus in the West and Diaz and Vasco de Gama in the East. But the Turks remained indifferent to all this and controlled their empire by sheer discipline and

military efficiency. The result was that commercial and wealth producing activities gradually faded away in the European parts of the Ottoman empire. Partly also this was brought about by the racial and religious conflict. The Turks and the Christian peoples of the Balkans had inherited the old religious feud from the time of the crusades and before. The growth of the new nationalism added fuel to this fire and there was continuous trouble. To give you an instance of how the European parts of the Ottoman dominions deteriorated: Athens, the famous city of old, was but a village of about two thousand inhabitants when Greece became free in 1829. (Now, a hundred years later, Athens has a population of over half a million).

This dropping away of commercial and other wealth-producing activities was ultimately bad for the Turkish rulers themselves. As the limbs of the empire grew weak and poor, the heart of the empire also grew weak and suffered. It is surprising indeed that in spite of all these conflicts and difficulties the empire lasted so long.

The strength of the Ottoman Sultans for several hundred years were the 'Janissaries', a corps of Turkish soldiers consisting of Christian slaves, who were carefully trained from boyhood upwards. These Janissaries remind one of the Egyptian Mamelukes but there was a difference between them. Although they remained the flower of the Turkish army they never became the ruling power as in Egypt. But like the Mamelukes they did not form a hereditary caste. As slaves they were favoured people with high posts and offices reserved for them; their sons however became free Muslims and for long they could not remain in this favoured corps, which was confined to slaves. Recruitment to the Corps was always from new white Christian slaves. All this sounds very extraordinary, does it not? But remember that the word slave had not got quite the same meaning in those days in Islamic countries, as it has now. Slaves were often technically and legally slaves but they rose

to the highest offices. In India you will remember the Slave Kings of Delhi; Saladin of Egypt also was originally a slave. The point of view of the Turks seems to have been that a very thorough training should be given to the ruling class to make them as efficient as possible. They knew, as every teacher knows, that the best period to train a person is from early childhood upwards. It was perhaps not easy to take away the children of their Muslim subjects and cut them off completely from their parents or make them slaves. So they got hold of little Christian boys and made them join the Sultan's slave household and gave them a rigorous training. Of course the little boys became Muslims as they grew up.

This system was extended to the Sultans themselves. The Sultan did not marry in the ordinary way. Carefully chosen slave girls were sent to his household and they became the mothers of his children. Thus all the Ottoman Sultans upto the early eighteenth century were sons of slave mothers and they had to undergo the same rigorous training and severe discipline as any other member of the slave household.

There was a certain amount of science in this careful selection of slaves and their discipline and training for special functions from that of the Sultan downwards. It did result in a measure of efficiency in particular spheres, and continually fresh blood came from the new slaves, and a hereditary ruling caste could not grow up. Perhaps the early strength of the empire depended on this system. But it was obviously utterly out of keeping with European or Asiatic conditions. It was quite different from the feudal system, and it was even further removed from the system which was replacing feudalism in Europe. Under this system, and in the absence of much trade and commerce, no real middle class could grow up. The system could not continue in its original purity after the second half of the sixteenth century when a hereditary element came into the slave household, and the sons of members of the household could remain in it and follow their fathers'

careers. In many other ways also there was a gradual loosening of the system. But the background remained, and this made Turkey entirely different from, and a stranger in Europe in spite of centuries of close association. Within Turkey itself the foreign communities remained wholly apart, with their own laws and groupings.

I have told you so much about this extraordinary old Turkish system because it was unique and it helped to shape the Ottoman empire. It does not of course exist now; it is a matter of history.

Turkey's history for the last two hundred years is one of warfare against the continually advancing Russians and against revolts by subject nationalities. Greece, Rumania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Bosnia, were all Balkan countries and parts of the Ottoman empire. Greece, as we saw, broke away in 1829 with the help of England, France and Russia. Russia is a Slav country and so are Bulgaria and Serbia in the Balkans. Tsarist Russia tried to appear as the protector and champion of these Balkan Slavs. The real lure for Russia was Constantinople and all its diplomacy was aimed at the eventual possession of this ancient seat of empire, the Tsar considering himself a successor of the Byzantine emperors. In 1730 began the series of Russo-Turkish wars, and they continued, with intervals of peace, in 1768, 1792, 1807, 1828, 1853, 1877 and lastly, in 1914. In 1774 Russia got the Crimea from Turkey and thus reached the Black Sea. But this was not much good as the Black Sea is bottled up and Constantinople sits at the neck. In 1792 and 1807 the Russian frontier kept on advancing towards Constantinople and the Turkish frontier receding. During the Greek War of Independence, the Tsar tried to profit by it by attacking the Turks when they had their hands full elsewhere. He would have captured Constantinople if England and Austria had not intervened.

Why did England and Austria save Turkey from

Russia? Not for love of Turkey, but because of rivalry and fear of Russia. I have told you before of the traditional rivalry of England and Russia in Asia and elsewhere. The possession of India especially brought the British right up to the Russian frontier and they were continually having nightmares as to what Tsarist Russia might do to India. So it was their policy to thwart her and prevent her from adding to her strength. The possession of Constantinople would have given her a fine port in the Mediterranean and enabled her to keep a fleet of warships near the route to India. This was too much of a risk and so England repeatedly stopped Russia from crushing Turkey. Austria also was interested in keeping Russia away. Austria is a tiny country now but a few years ago it was a big empire adjoining the Balkans, and it wanted to have a big share in the Balkan countries itself when Turkey went to pieces. So it had to keep Russia away.

Poor Turkey seemed in a bad way with these powerful neighbours waiting for something to happen to her in order to pounce upon her and tear her to pieces. The Tsar of Russia said to the British ambassador in 1853 referring to Turkey: "We have on our hands a sick man—a very sick man He may die suddenly upon our hands . . ." The phrase became a famous one, and Turkey was henceforth the *Sick Man of Europe*. But the sick man took a mighty long time in dying!

In that very year, 1853, the Tsar made another attempt to put an end to him. That resulted in the Crimean War in Russia, and thus saved her. Twenty-one years later, 1877, the Tsar had another go at Turkey and defeated her, but again foreign intervention saved Turkey to some extent, at any rate saved Constantinople from Russia. There was a famous international conference in Berlin in 1878 to consider the fate of Turkey, and Bismarck was there and Disraeli, and many other leading politicians of Europe, and they threatened and intrigued against each other. England seemed to be on the verge of war with Russia when the latter gave

in. As a result of the treaty of Berlin the Balkan countries Bulgaria, Serbia, Rumania and Montenegro gained their independence; Austria occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina (which in theory remained under Turkish sovereignty); and Britain took the island of Cyprus, as a kind of commission from Turkey, for having sided with her to some extent.

The next Russo-Turkish war took place thirty-six years later, in 1914, as a part of the Great War.

Meanwhile considerable changes had been taking place in Turkey. The decisive defeat by Russia in 1774 had given the first shock to the Turks and made them realise that they were getting left behind by the rest of Europe. Being a military nation, the first thing that struck them was that the army should be brought up to date. This was partly done and it was through the new officer class that western ideas crept into Turkey. As I have told you there was not much of a middle class, and there was no other organized class. After the Crimean War of 1853—56 a real attempt at westernization was made. A movement favouring a constitutional form of government (which meant a democratic assembly instead of the autocracy of the Sultan) developed. Midhat Pasha was the leader of this. In 1876 there were riots in Constantinople in favour of having a constitution and the Sultan granted it, only to set it aside almost immediately because of a revolt in Bulgaria and the Russian War. The heavy expense of this War and the cost of the reforms at the top without any fundamental economic change brought about the bankruptcy of the Turkish government, with the result that money had to be borrowed from western financiers, and these people took control of part of the revenue. So the attempt at westernization and reform was not a success. It was difficult to fit this in with the old fabric of the empire.

Early in the twentieth century the demand for a constitution again became strong. As before, the only organised people were the military officers and it was

among them that the new party, called the Young Turk Party, spread rapidly. Secret "Committees of Union and Progress" were formed and, having one over a great part of the army, they forced the Sultan in 1908 to restore the old constitution of 1876. There were great rejoicings and Turks and Armenians and others, who had till then mutually killed each other, embraced and shed tears of joy at the dawn of a new era when all were going to be equal and the subject races would have full rights. Enwar Bey, handsome and vain, but also daring and adventurous, was the chief hero of this bloodless revolution. Mustapha Kemal, later to become the saviour of Turkey, was also an important Young Turk leader, but compared to Enwar, he was in the background, and the two did not like each other.

The Young Turks did not have an easy time. The Sultan gave them trouble and there was after all bloodshed and the Sultan was deposed and another put in his place. There were economic difficulties; and trouble with foreign powers. Austria took advantage of the prevailing confusion to declare the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (which she had occupied in 1878 after the Treaty of Berlin). Italy forcibly seized Tripoli in North Africa and declared war. The Turks could do little as they had no proper navy and had to submit to Italian demands. They had barely done so, when a new danger nearer home threatened them. Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Montenegro anxious to drive out Turkey from Europe and share the spoils, and seeing that the moment was favourable, allied themselves together in a Balkan League and attacked Turkey in October, 1912. Turkey was exhausted and disorganised, and a contest for power was going on between the constitutionalists and the reactionaries. She collapsed completely before the Balkan League and had huge losses. Thus the first Balkan War ended in a few months and Turkey was driven out of Europe almost completely with only Constantinople remaining to her. Even Adrianople, the oldest of her European cities, was wrenched from

her, much against her will.

Very soon however the victors fell out over the spoils and Bulgaria suddenly and treacherously attacked her previous allies. There was mutual slaughter then and, to profit by the confusion, Rumania, which had previously kept aloof, joined in. In the result, Bulgaria lost all she had gained, and Rumania, Greece and Serbia increased their territories greatly. Turkey also got back Adrianople. The hatred of the Balkan people for each other is something amazing. The Balkan countries are small but they have been the storm centre of Europe on many an occasion.

The Sultan who was deposed by the Young Turks in 1909 was an interesting person. His name was Abdul Hamid II, and he came to the throne in 1876. He had no love for reforms and modern innovations, but he was able in his way and had a reputation for playing off the great powers against one another. All the Ottoman Sultans, you will remember, were also Caliphs, or the religious heads of Islam. Abdul Hamid tried to exploit his position as such by attempting to build up a Pan-Islamic movement, that is a movement in which Moslems of other countries could join, and so he could get their support. There was some talk of this pan-Islam for a few years in Europe and Asia but it had no substantial foundation and the Great War put an end to it completely. Pan-Islamism was opposed by nationalism in Turkey, and nationalism proved the greater force of the two.

Sultan Abdul Hamid became very unpopular in Europe, because he was considered responsible for atrocities and massacres in Bulgaria and Armenia and elsewhere. Gladstone called him the "Great Assassin" and led a great campaign in England against these atrocities. The Turks themselves consider his reign as the darkest period of their history. Massacres and atrocities seem to have been fairly regular occurrences in the Balkans, and in Armenia and both parties indulged in them. The Balkan peoples and the Armenians were

as guilty of massacring Turks as the Turks were of massacring them. This was really a cruel and barbarous form of the national movement for freedom and its suppression. Centuries of racial and religious animosities had sunk deep into the very nature of these peoples and they found terrible expression. Armenia was the worst sufferer. It is now one of the Soviet republics near the Caucasus.

So after the Balkan Wars Turkey found herself exhausted and with just a foothold left in Europe. The rest of her empire was also cracking up. Egypt of course belonged to her in name only; in reality Britain occupied her and exploited her. But even the other Arab countries were showing signs of a national movement. It is not surprising that Turkey felt dispirited and disillusioned. All the brave hopes of 1908 seem to have ended in ashes. Just then Germany seemed to sympathise with her. Germany was looking east, and bad visions of German influence pervading the whole of the middle east. Turkey also turned to Germany and their contacts grew. This was the position when the World War of 1914 came, just a year after the second Balkan war had ended. Turkey was to have no rest.

In reading about the old Turkey you will often come across the words *Sublime Porte*, meaning the Turkish government. I used to wonder why this resounding name should be given to it. It appears that the building in which the principal office of the old Turkish government was situated had a high gate and hence the government itself became the Sublime Porte. People have a way of referring to government offices in this way. It sounds so much more imposing! *Whitehall* means the British government; so also *Downing Street*, where the British Prime Minister lives; and the *Quai d'Orsay* means the French foreign office.

But I suppose that there is no such thing as the Sublime Porte now, for the Turkish capital is now at Angora, and Constantinople, or Istambul as I should call it now, is but a great provincial city.

THE RUSSIA OF THE TSARS

March 16, 1933

Russia to-day is a Soviet country and its government is run by representatives of the workers and peasants. In some ways it is the most advanced country in the world. Whatever actual conditions may be, the whole structure of government and society is based on the principle of social equality. That is so now. And some years ago, and right through the nineteenth century and before Russia was the most backward and reactionary country in Europe. The purest forms of autocracy and authoritarianism flourish there; in spite of revolutions and changes in Western Europe, the theory of the divine right of kings was still upheld by the Tsars. Even the Church, which was the old orthodox Greek Church and not the Roman or Protestant, was perhaps even more authoritarian than elsewhere, and it was a prop and a tool of the Tsarist government. 'Holy Russia' the country was called, and the Tsar was the *Little White Father* of everybody, and these legends were used by the Church and the authorities to befog people's minds and turn their attention from political and economic conditions. Holiness has kept strange company in the course of history!

The typical symbol of this 'Holy Russia' was the *Knout*, and a frequent occupation was *Pogroms*—two words which Tsarist Russia presented to the world. The Knout was a whip used to punish serfs and others. Pogrom means devastation and organized persecution; in effect it meant massacres, especially of the Jews. And behind Tsarist Russia were the vast lonely steppes of Siberia, a name which had come to be associated with

exile and prison and despair. Large numbers of political convicts were sent to Siberia, and big exile camps and colonies grew up, and near each of them were the graves of suicides. Long and lonely terms of exile and prison are hard to bear, and the mind of many a brave person has given way and the body broken down under the strain. To live cut off from the world and far away from one's friends and companions and those who share one's hopes and lighten one's burden, one must have strength of mind, and inner depths which calm and steady, and the courage to endure. So Tsarist Russia struck down every head that was raised and crushed every attempt to gain freedom. Even travelling was made difficult, so that liberal ideas might not come from abroad. But freedom repressed has a way of adding compound interest to itself, and when it moves forward, its progress is likely to be in jumps, which upset the old apple cart.

In our previous letters we have had some glimpses of the activities and policies of Tsarist Russia in various parts of Asia and Europe—in the Far East, in Central Asia, in Persia, and in Turkey. Let us now fill the picture a little and connect these separate activities with the main theme. The geographical position of Russia is such that it has always had two faces, one looking west and the other east. It is, by virtue of its position, a Eurasian power, and its later history has been an alternation of its interest in East and West. Repulsed in the west, it looked to the east; held up in the east, it turned round again to the west.

I have told you of the breaking up of the old Mongol empires, the legacy of Chengiz Khan, and of how the Mongols of the Golden Horde were ultimately driven away from Russia by the Russian princes under the leadership of the Prince of Moscow. This took place at the end of the fourteenth century. The princes of Moscow gradually became the autocratic rulers of the whole country and began to call themselves Tsars (or Caesars). Their outlook and customs remained

largely Mongolian and there was little in common between them and Western Europe, which considered Russia as barbarous. In 1689 came Tsar Peter to the throne, called Peter the Great. He decided to make Russia face the west and he went on a long tour of European countries to study conditions there. He copied much that he saw and he imposed his ideas of westernization on his reluctant and ignorant nobility. The masses of course were very backward and repressed and there was no question for Peter as to what they thought of his reforms. Peter saw that the great nations of his day were strong on the sea, and he realized the importance of sea-power. But Russia, huge as it was, had no outlet on the sea then except in the Arctic Ocean, which was not much good. So he pushed north-west to the Baltic and South to the Crimea. He did not reach the Crimea (his successors did that), but he got to the Baltic after defeating Sweden. He founded a new western-looking city, called St. Petersburg, on the Neva, off the Gulf of Finland, which led to the Baltic Sea. He made this his capital, and so tried to break with the old traditions which hung to Moscow. Peter died in 1725.

More than half a century later, in 1782, another Russian ruler tried to 'westernize' the country. This was a woman, Catherine II, also called the Great. She was an extraordinary woman, strong, cruel, able and with a very unsavoury reputation about her personal life. Having disposed of her husband, the Tsar, by murder, she became the Autocrat of all the Russias and ruled for fourteen years. She posed as a great patron of culture and tried to make friends with Voltaire, with whom she corresponded. The French court at Versailles was copied by her to some extent, and some educational reforms were introduced. But all this was at the top and for show purposes. Culture cannot be copied suddenly; it has to be grown into. A backward nation merely aping advanced nation changes the gold and silver of real culture into tinsel. The culture of

Western Europe was based on certain social conditions. Peter and Catherine, without trying to produce these conditions, tried to copy the superstructure, with the result that the burden of these changes fell on the masses and actually strengthened serfdom and the Tsar's autocracy. We might compare this with the coming of the British in India. They tried, and still go on trying, to introduce and maintain an expensive administrative machinery at the top without attempting any change in social conditions. Indeed they deliberately sided with social conservatism and reaction. Hence their coming strengthened feudalism and other reactionary social reforms.

So in Tsarist Russia an ounce of progress went hand in hand with a ton of reaction. The Russian peasants were practically slaves. They were tied to their lands and could not leave it without special permission. Education was limited to some officers and intellectuals, all drawn from the landed gentry. There was practically no middle class, and the masses were entirely illiterate and backward. In the past there had been frequent and bloody peasant revolts, blind revolts due to too much oppression, and they had been crushed. Now, with a bit of education at the top, some of the prevalent ideas of Western Europe also trickled through. Those were the days of the French Revolution and then of Napoleon. Napoleon's fall, you will remember, resulted in reaction all over Europe, and Tsar Alexander I with his 'Holy Alliance' of emperors was the champion of this reaction. His successor was even worse. Stung into action, a group of young officers and intellectuals rose in rebellion in 1825. They all belonged to the landowning class and had no backing in the masses or the army; they were crushed. They are called "Decembrists" because their revolt took place in December, 1825. This revolt is the first outward sign of political awakening in Russia. It was preceded by secret political societies as every kind of public political activity was prevented by the Tsar's government. These

secret societies continued and revolutionary ideas began to spread, especially among the intellectuals and university students.

After Russia's defeat in the Crimean War, some reforms were introduced, and in 1861 serfdom was abolished. This was a great thing for the peasantry and yet it did not bring them much relief for the freed serfs were not given enough land to support them. Meanwhile, the spread of revolutionary ideas among the intelligentsia and their repression by the Tsar's government went on side by side. There was no link or common ground between these advanced intellectuals and the peasantry. So, in the early seventies, the socialistically inclined (they were all very vague and idealistic) students decided to carry their propaganda to the peasantry and thousands of students descended upon the villages. The peasants did not know these students. They distrusted them and suspected some plot perhaps to restore serfdom. And so these peasants actually arrested many of these students, who had come at the peril of their lives, and handed them over to the Tsar's police! This was an extraordinary example of trying to work in the air without being in touch with the masses.

This utter want of success with the peasantry was a great shock to these student intellectuals and in disgust and despair they took to what is called 'terrorism', that is, throwing bombs and otherwise trying to kill those in authority. This was the beginning in Russia of terrorism and the bomb, and with it revolutionary activities took a new phase. These bomb-throwers called themselves "Liberals with a bomb", and their terrorist organisation was named *Will of the People*. This name was rather bombastic as the people concerned were relatively small groups.

Thus began the new contest between these groups of determined young men and women and the Tsar's government. The revolutionary forces were swelled by the addition of people from the many subject races and

national minorities in Russia. All these races and minorities were ill treated by the government. They were not allowed to make public use of their own languages and in many other ways they were harassed and humiliated. Poland, which was industrially more advanced than Russia, had been made just a province of Russia and the very name of Poland had practically disappeared. The polish language was prohibited. If this was the treatment accorded to Poland, worse treatment was given to other minorities and races. There was a great rebellion in Poland in the sixties which was suppressed with great cruelty, and fifty thousand Poles were sent to Siberia! Jews were continually being subjected to 'pogroms', that is, massacres, and large numbers of them migrated to other countries.

It was natural that these Jews and others, full of anger at the Tsarist oppression of their races, should join the Russian terrorists. *Nililism*, as this terrorism was called, grew and it met naturally with a bloody suppression, and long trains of political convicts trudged in the Siberian steppes, and many were executed. To meet this menace the Tsar's government adopted a method which was carried to extraordinary lengths. They sent 'agents-provocateurs' to the ranks of the terrorists and revolutionaries, and these people actually provoked bomb outrages, and sometimes themselves committed them, so that they might implicate others. One of these famous 'agents-provocateurs' was Azeff, who was one of the leading bomb-throwing revolutionaries and was at the same time a head of the Russian secret police! There are other well authenticated cases of this kind where Tsarist generals in the secret police took to bomb-throwing *as agents of the police* to get others into trouble!

The terrorists and other revolutionaries also started 'expropriations' as they called them. This meant armed hold ups of government buildings, railway trains, post offices, etc., to obtain funds. Two persons, who are very well known to-day, took a prominent part in these very

risky expropriations! One was Stalin, practically the dictator of Russia to-day, and the other was Pilsudski, the dictator of Poland now. Pilsudski is to-day very much against all socialists, radicals and the like. But in the eighties and afterwards he was very much on the other side. He was even implicated in a terrorist attempt on the Tsar's life and sentenced to five years in Siberia.

While all this was happening the Russian dominions were continually spreading eastwards and, as I have told you, they eventually reached the Pacific. In Central Asia they came to the frontiers of Afghanistan, and in the south they were pushing away at the Turkish frontier. Another important development, from the sixties onwards, was the rise of western industry. This was limited to a few areas only, like the Petersburg neighbourhood, and in Moscow, and the country as a whole remained wholly agricultural. But the factories that were put up were quite up-to-date and were usually under English management. Two results followed. Russian capitalism developed rapidly in these few industrial areas, and a working class also grew equally rapidly. As in the early days of the British factory system the Russian workers were terribly exploited and made to work almost night and day. But there was this difference. New ideas had now arisen, ideas of socialism and communism, and the Russian worker had a fresh mind and was receptive to these ideas. The British worker with a long traditions behind him had grown conservative and tied to old ideas.

These new ideas began to take shape and a "Social Democratic Labour Party" was formed. This was based on the Marxist philosophy. These Marxists declared themselves against acts of terrorism. According to the theories of Karl Marx the working class had to be roused to action and only by such mass action could they achieve their goal. The killing of individuals by terrorism would not move the working class to such action, for the goal was the overthrow of Tsarism and

not the assassination of the Tsar or his ministers.

As early as the eighties a young man, later to become known all over the world as Lenin, had participated in revolutionary activities even as a student at school. In 1887, when he was seventeen, he had to face a terrible blow. His elder brother Alexander, to whom Lenin was greatly attached, was executed on the scaffold for taking part in a terroristic attempt on the Tsar's life. In spite of the shock, Lenin said even then that freedom was not to be obtained by methods of terrorism; the way was through mass action only. And, grimly and with set teeth, this young man went on with his school work, appeared for his final school examination, and passed with distinction. Such was the stuff of which the leader and maker of the revolution of thirty years later was made!

Marx used to think that the working class revolution which he predicted would begin in a highly industrialised country, like Germany, with a big and organized working class. He considered Russia as the most unlikely place for this because of its backwardness and medievalism. But in Russia he found faithful followers among the young, who studied him with a passion for finding out what they should do to put an end to their intolerable condition. The very fact that in Tsarist Russia no open activity or constitutional methods were open to them drove them to this study and to discussion among themselves. These were sent in large numbers to prison, to Siberia, or exiled abroad. Wherever they went they continued this study of Marxism and their preparation for the day of action.

I must continue this account of Russia in my next letter.

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1905 THAT FAILED

March 17, 1933

The Russian Marxists—the Social Democratic Party—had to face a crisis in 1903, when they had to consider and answer a question which every party based on certain principles and definite ideals has, some time or other, to face and answer. Indeed every man and woman who have such principles and beliefs have to face such crises many times in their lives. The question was whether they should stick to their principles completely and prepare for a revolution of the working class, or whether they should compromise a little with existing conditions and thus prepare the ground for the ultimate revolution. This question had arisen in all the Western European countries, and everywhere, more or less there had been a weakening of the social Democratic or similar parties and internal conflicts. In Germany the Marxists had bravely declared for the full loaf, the revolutionary view, but in effect they had toned down and adopted the milder attitude. In France many leading socialists deserted their parties and became cabinet ministers. So also in Italy, Belgium and elsewhere. In Britain Marxism was weak and the question did not rise, but even then a labour member became a cabinet minister.

In Russia the position was different as there was no room for parliamentary action. There was no parliament. Even so there were possibilities of giving up what was called the 'illegal' methods of struggle against Tsarism and carrying on for a while with quiet theoretical propaganda. But Lenin had clear and definite views on the subject. He was for no weakening, no

compromise, because he was afraid that otherwise opportunists would flood their party. He had seen the methods adopted by western socialist parties and he had not been impressed by them. As he wrote later, in another connection, "the tactics of parliamentarism, as practised by western socialists, were incomparably more demoralizing, having gradually converted each Socialist party into a little Tammany Hall with its climbers and job-hunters". (Tammany Hall is in New York. It has become a symbol of political corruption). Lenin did not care how many people he had with him—he even threatened at one period to stand all alone—but he insisted that only those should be taken who were 'whole-hoggers', who were prepared to give everything for the cause, and even do without the applause of the multitude. He wanted to build up a body of experts in revolution who could develop the movement efficiently. He had no use for just sympathisers and fair weather friends.

This was a hard line to take up and many thought it was unwise. On the whole however the victory lay with Lenin and the Social Democratic Party split up in two, and two names, which have become famous, came into existence—*Bolsheviki* and *Mensheviki*. *Bolshevik* is a terrible word now for some people; but all it means is the majority. *Menshevik* means minority. Lenin's group in the party, after this split in 1903, being in the majority, was called Bolshevik, that is, the majority party. It is interesting to note that at that time Trotsky then a young man of 24, who was to be Lenin's great colleague in the 1917 revolution, was on the side of the Mensheviks. But he left them soon after.

All these discussions and debates took place far away from Russia, in London! A Russian party meeting had to be held in London because there was no room in Tsarist Russia for it, and most of its members were exiles, or escaped convicts from Siberia.

Meanwhile, in Russia itself, trouble was brewing.

Political strikes were signs of this. A political strike of workers means a strike not for economic betterment, such as higher wages, but to protest against some political action of government. It means some political consciousness on the part of the workers. Thus if Indian factory workers strike because Bapu has been arrested, or some extraordinary bit of oppression has occurred, it is a political strike. Strangely enough, these political strikes were rare in Western Europe in spite of its powerful trade unions and workers' organisations. Or perhaps they were rare because the workers' leaders had toned down because of their vested interests. In Russia the continuous tyranny of Tsarism kept the political side always in the forefront. As early as 1903 there were many spontaneous political strikes in South Russia. The movement was on a big mass scale but, lacking leaders, it faded away.

The next year came trouble in the Far East. I have told you in another letter of the long line of the Siberian Railway being built, across the north Asiatic steppes, right up to the Pacific Ocean; of clashes with Japan from 1894 onwards; and of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. I have also told you of 'Red Sunday'—January 22, 1905—when the Tsar's troops shot down a peaceful demonstration, led by a priest, which had gone to the 'Little Father' to beg for bread. A thrill of horror ran through the country and there were many political strikes. Ultimately there was a general strike throughout Russia. The new type of Marxist revolution had begun!

The workers who had struck, especially in big centres like Petersburg and Moscow, created a new organization—the 'Soviet' in each such centre. This was at first just a committee to run the general strike. Trotsky became the leader of the Petersburg soviet. The Tsar's government was at first completely taken aback and it surrendered to some extent, making promises about a constitutional assembly and a democratic franchise. The great citadel of autocracy seemed to

have fallen! What the peasant revolts of the past had failed to do, what the terrorists with their bombs had not succeeded in doing, and what the moderate liberal constitutionalists with their cautious pleadings could not do, that the workers had done with their general strike. Tsardom, for the first time in its history, had to bow down to the common people. It turned out later to be an empty victory. But still the memory of it was a light in the dark for the workers.

The Tsar had promised a constitutional assembly, a *Duma*, as it was called, which means a thinking place, and not a talking shop like a parliament (from the French *parler*)! This promise cooled the ardour of the moderate liberals who were satisfied. They are always satisfied! The landlords frightened by the revolution agreed to some reforms which benefited the better off peasants. The Tsar's government then faced the real revolutionaries and, realising their weakness, played up to it. On the one side were the hungry workers more interested in bread and higher wages than in political constitutions, and the poorer peasantry raising the dangerous slogan: "give us land"; on the other were revolutionaries chiefly concerned with the political aspect and hoping to get a parliament after the west European model, and not thinking much of the real demands or feelings of the masses. Many of the better class skilled workers who were organised in trade unions joined the revolution because they appreciated the political aspect. But the masses generally in the cities and the villages were apathetic. The Tsarist government and police thereupon tried the time honoured method of all despotisms: they created divisions and incited these hungry masses against some of the revolutionary groups. The unhappy Jews were massacred by the Russians; the Armenians by the Tartars, and there were even clashes between the revolutionary students and the poorer workers. Having broken the back of the revolution in this way in various parts of the country, the government attacked the two storm centres

—Petersburg and Moscow. The Petersburg Soviet was easily crushed. In Moscow, the military helped the revolutionaries and there was a five day battle before the Soviet was finally crushed. Then followed revenge. In Moscow, it is said that the government put to death a thousand persons without trial and imprisoned seventy thousand! In the whole country about fourteen thousand died as a result of the various risings.

So ended, in defeat and disaster, the Russian revolution of 1905. It has been called the prologue of the 1917 revolution, which succeeded. "The masses need the schooling of big events" before their consciousness can be roused and they can act on a big scale. The events of 1905 provided them, at a heavy cost, with this schooling.

The Duma was elected and met in May, 1906. It was far from being a revolutionary body, but it was too liberal for the Tsar's liking, and he sent it home after two and a half months. Having crushed the revolution he cared little for the wrath of the Duma. The dismissed deputies of the Duma, who were middle class liberal constitutionalists took themselves to Finland (which was quite near Petersburg and which was then a semi-independent country under the Tsar's suzerainty) and called upon the Russian people to refuse to pay taxes and to resist recruitment to the army and navy as a mark of protest against the dismissal of the Duma. The deputies were out of touch with the masses and there was no response to their appeal.

Next year, in 1907, a second Duma was elected. The police tried to prevent radical candidates from getting elected by putting all manner of difficulties in their way, and sometimes by the simple expedient of arresting them. Still the Duma was not to the Tsar's liking and he dismissed it after three months. The Tsar's government now took steps to prevent all undesirables from getting elected by changing the electoral law. It succeeded and the third Duma was a highly respectable and conservative body, and it had a

long life.

You may wonder why the Tsar took the trouble to have these feeble Dumas when he was strong enough to carry on as he liked, after having crushed the 1905 revolution. The reason was partly to satisfy some small groups in Russia, chiefly the rich landlords and merchants. The situation in the country was bad. The people had no doubt been crushed but they were sullen and angry. So it was thought worthwhile to keep at least the rich people at the top in hand. But a more important reason was to impress European countries that the Tsar was a liberal monarch. Tsarist misgovernment and tyranny were becoming bywords in Western Europe. When the first Duma was dismissed a leader of the British Liberal party shouted out, in the House of Commons I think, 'The Duma is dead! Long live the Duma'. This showed how much sympathy there was for the Duma. And then the Tsar wanted money and a great deal of it. The thrifty French had been lending it to him; it was indeed with the help of a French loan that the Tsar crushed the 1905 revolution. It was a strange contrast—republican France helping autocratic Russia to crush her radicals and revolutionaries. But republican France meant French bankers. Anyhow appearances had to be kept and the Duma helped in this.

Meanwhile the European and the world situation was changing rapidly. After Russia's defeat by Japan, England had ceased to fear Russia as she used to. A new fear had arisen for England, that of Germany, both in industry and on the sea, which for so long had been England's preserve. It was fear of Germany also that had made France so generous with her loans to Russia. This German menace, as it was called, drove two ancient enemies to embrace each other. In 1907 an Anglo-Russian treaty was signed which settled all their outstanding points of dispute, in Afghanistan, Persia and elsewhere. Later a triple *entente* developed between England, France and Russia. In the Balkans Austria was Russia's rival, and Austria was Germany's ally, and

so was Italy on paper. So the triple *entente* of England, France, and Russia faced the triple alliance of Germany, Austria and Italy. And the hosts prepared for action while peaceful people slumbered not knowing the terrors that were in store for them.

These years in Russia, after 1905, were years of reaction. Bolshevism and the other revolutionary elements had been completely crushed. In foreign countries some of the Bolsheviks in exile, like Lenin, were carrying on patiently, writing books and pamphlets and trying to adapt the Marxist theory to changing conditions. The gulf between Menshevism (the more moderate minority party of the Marxists) and Bolshevism grew. Menshevism became more prominent during these years of reaction. Indeed, although it was called the minority party, it had far more people on its side then. From 1912 onwards again a change crept in the Russian world and revolutionary activity grew, and with it grew Bolshevism. By the middle of 1914 the air of Petrograd was thick with talk of revolution and, as in 1905, large numbers of political strikes took place. And yet—such are revolutions made of!—of the Petersburg Bolshevik Committee of seven, it was discovered later that three were in the Tsarist secret service! The Bolsheviks had a small group in the Duma and the leader of this was Malinowsky. He also was found to be a police agent! And Lenin trusted him.

The World War began in August, 1914, and this suddenly turned attention to the warring fronts, and consumption took away the chief workers, and the revolutionary movement died down. The Bolsheviks who raised their voices against the war were few and they became extremely unpopular.

We have arrived at our appointed post—the World War—and we must stop here. But before I end this letter I should like to draw your attention to Russian art and literature. Tsarist Russia, with all its faults, managed to keep up, most people know, wonderful dancing. It produced also a series of master writers in

the nineteenth century who built up a great literary tradition. In both the long novel and the short story they showed an amazing mastery. At the beginning of the century, the contemporary of Byron and Shelley and Keats, there lived Pushkin, who is said to be the greatest of Russian poets. Of the novelists the famous writers of the nineteenth century are Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoevsky and Tchekhov. Then there is, perhaps the greatest of them, Leo Tolstoy, who not only was a genius at writing novels, but became a religious and spiritual leader, whose influence went far. Indeed it reached Bapu who was then in South Africa and the two appreciated each other and corresponded with each other. The bond of union was the firm faith of both in non-resistance or non-violence. According to Tolstoy this was the basic teaching of Christ, and Bapu drew the same conclusion from the old Hindu writings. While Tolstoy remained a prophet, living up to his convictions, but rather cut off from the world, Bapu applied this seemingly negative thing in an active way to mass problems in South Africa and India.

One of the great nineteenth century Russian writers is still living. He is Maxim Gorki.

THE END OF AN EPOCH

March 22, 1933

The nineteenth century! What a long time we have been held up by these hundred years! For four months, off and on, I have written to you about this period, and I am a little weary of it, and so perhaps will you be when you read these letters. I began by telling you that it was a fascinating period, but even fascination palls after a while. We have really gone beyond the nineteenth century and are fairly well advanced in the twentieth. The year 1914 was our limit. It was in that year that the hounds of war, as the saying goes, were let loose on Europe and the world. That year forms a turning point in history. It is the close of one epoch and the beginning of another.

Nineteen hundred and fourteen! Even that year is beyond your time, and yet it was less than nineteen years ago, and that is not a long period even in human life, much less in history. But the world has changed so greatly during these years, and is changing still, that it seems that an age has passed since then; and 1914 and the years that preceded it go back into the history of long ago and become parts of a distant past of which we read in books of history, and which is so different from our own day. Of these great changes I shall have to tell you something later. One warning I shall give you now. You are learning geography at school, and the geography you learn is very different from what I had to learn when I was at school in the years before 1914. And it may be that much of this geography that you are learning to-day, you may have to unlearn before long, even as I had to do. Old land marks, old

countries disappeared in the smoke of war, and new ones, with names difficult to remember, took their place. Hundreds of cities changed their names almost over night; St. Petersburg became Petrograd and then Leningrad, Constantinople must now be called Istambul, Peking is known as Peiping, and Prague of Bohemia has become Praha of Gecho-Slovakia!

In my letters about the nineteenth century, I have necessarily dealt with continents and countries separately; we have considered different aspects and different movements also separately. But of course you will remember that all this was more or less simultaneous, and history marched all over the world with its thousands of feet together. Science and industry, politics and economics, abundance and poverty, capitalism and imperialism, democracy and socialism, Darwin and Marx, freedom and bondage, famine and pestilence, war and peace, civilization and barbarism—they all had their place in this strange fabric, and each acted and reacted on the other. So if we are to form a picture of this period, or any other period, in our mind, it must be a complex and ever moving and changing picture, like a kaleidoscope, but many parts of the picture will not be pleasant to contemplate.

The dominant feature of this period was, as we have seen, the growth of capitalistic industry by large scale power production, that is production with the help of some mechanical power, like water, steam, or electricity (we have the name 'power house' for an electricity-generating plant). This had different effects in different parts of the world, and these effects were both direct and indirect. Thus the production of cloth by the power loom in Lancashire upset conditions in remote Indian villages and put an end to many callings there. Capitalistic industry was dynamic; by its very nature it grew and grew bigger and its hunger was never satisfied. Its distinguishing mark was acquisitiveness; it was always out to acquire and hold, and then acquire again. Individuals tried to do so, and so did nations.

The society that grew up under this system is therefore called an acquisitive society. The aim was always to produce more and more, and to apply the surplus wealth thus produced to the building of more factories and railways and such like undertakings, and also of course to enrich the owners. In the pursuit of this aim everything else was sacrificed. The workers who produced the wealth of industry benefited least from it, and they, including women and children, had to pass through a terrible time before their lot was improved a little. Colonies and dependencies were also sacrificed and exploited for the benefit of this capitalistic industry and the nations which possessed it.

So capitalism went blindly and ruthlessly forward leaving many victims in its trail. None the less its march was a triumphant progress. Aided by science, it succeeded in many things and this success dazzled the world, and seemed to atone for much of the misery it had caused. Incidentally, and without planning deliberately for them, it produced many of the good things of life also. But underneath the bright surface and the good, there was plenty of bad. Indeed the most remarkable thing about it was the contrasts it produced, and the more it grew the greater were these contrasts: extreme poverty and extreme wealth; slum and skyscraper; empire state and dependent exploited colonial state. Europe was the dominant continent, and Asia and Africa the exploited ones. For the greater part of the century America was outside the currents of world events, but it was going ahead rapidly and building up vast resources. In Europe, England was the wealthy and proud and smugly satisfied leader of capitalism, and especially of its imperial aspect.

The very pace and grasping nature of capitalistic industry brought matters to a head and produced opposition and agitation and ultimately some checks to protect workers. The early days of the factory system had meant terrible exploitation of the workers, and especially women and children. Women and children were

employed in preference to men because they were cheaper, and they were made to work, sometimes eighteen hours a day, in the most unhealthy and abominable conditions. At last the state intervened and passed laws, factory legislation they are called, limiting hours of work per day and insisting on better conditions. Women and children were especially protected by these laws, but it was a long and a hard struggle to pass them, in face of the strenuous opposition of the factory owners.

Capitalistic industry further led to socialistic and communistic ideas which, while they accepted the new industry, challenged the basis of capitalism. Working men's organisations and trade unions and internationals also developed.

Capitalism led to imperialism, and the impact of western capitalistic industry on long established economic conditions in eastern countries caused havoc there. Gradually even in these eastern countries capitalistic industry took root and began to grow. Nationalism also grew there as a challenge to the imperialism of the west.

So capitalism shook up the world, and in spite of the terrible human misery it caused, it was, on the whole, a beneficent movement, at any rate in the west. It brought in its train great material progress and raised tremendously the standards of human well being. The common man became far more important than he had ever been. In practice he did not have much of a say in anything, in spite of an illusory vote, but in theory his status grew in the State, and with this his self-respect increased. This applies of course to the western countries where capitalistic industry had established itself. There was a vast accumulation of knowledge, and science did wonders, and its thousand applications to life made life easier for everybody. Medicine, especially in its preventive aspects, and sanitation, began to suppress and root out many diseases which had been a curse to man. To mention one instance: the origin.

and prevention of malaria was discovered, and there is no doubt now that it can be rooted out of an area if the necessary steps are taken. The fact that malaria still continues and has millions of victims in India and elsewhere is not the fault of science but of a careless government and an ignorant populace.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the century was the progress in the methods of transportation and communication. The railway and the steamship and the electric telegraph and the motor car changed the world completely and made it for all human purposes a vastly different place from what it had always been. The world shrank, and its inhabitants grew nearer to each other, and could see much more of each other, and, with mutual knowledge, many barriers, born of ignorance, went down. Common ideas began to spread which produced some measure of uniformity all over the world. Right at the end of the period we are discussing came wireless telegraphy and flying. They are common enough now and you have been up in an aeroplane several times, and journeyed by it, without thinking much of it. The development of wireless telegraphy and flying belong to the twentieth century and our own times. People had often gone up in balloons but no one, except in old myths and stories, the flying carpets of the Arabian Nights and the *uran-khatolā* of our Indian stories, had gone up on anything which was heavier than air. The first persons to succeed in going up in a heavier than air machine, the parent of the present aeroplane, were two American brothers, Wilbur and Orville Wright. They flew less than three hundred yards in December, 1903, but even so they had done something which had not been done before. After that there was continuous progress in flying and I remember the excitement that was caused in 1909 when the Frenchman Bleriot flew over the English Channel from France to England. Soon afterwards I saw the first aeroplane fly over the Eifel Tower in Paris. And many years later, in May, 1927, you and

I were present in Paris also when Charles Lindbergh came like a silver arrow flashing across the Atlantic and landed at Le Bourget, the aerodrome of Paris.

All this goes to the credit side of this period when capitalistic industry was dominant. Man certainly did wonderful things during this century. And one thing more to the credit side. As greedy and grasping capitalism grew, a check to it was devised in the co-operative movement. This was a combination of people to buy or sell goods in common and dividing up the profits among themselves. The ordinary capitalist way was the competitive cut throat way where each person tried to overreach the other. The co-operative way was based on mutual co-operation. You must have seen many co-operative stores. The co-operative movement grew greatly in Europe in the nineteenth century. Perhaps it succeeded most in the little country of Denmark.

On the political side there was a growth of democratic ideas and more and more people got the right to vote for their parliaments and assemblies. But this franchise, or right to vote, was limited to men, and women, however capable they might otherwise be, were not considered good or wise enough to have this right. Many women resented this and in England a great agitation was organised by the women during the early years of the twentieth century. The woman suffrage movement this was called, and because men did not treat it seriously and paid little attention to it, the women suffragettes took to forcible and even violent methods to compel attention. They upset the business of parliament by creating 'scenes' and attacked British cabinet ministers bodily, so that these ministers had to be under police protection continually! Organised violence on a big scale also took place and many women were sent to jail when they started hunger-striking. Thereupon they were let out and as soon as they got well again, they were put back in prison. Parliament passed a special law to permit this being done, and this was popularly called the *Cat and Mouse Act*. These methods of the

suffragettes, however, were certainly successful in attracting widespread attention. A few years later, after the World War began, women's right to the vote was recognised.

The women's movement, or the feminist movement as it is often called, was not confined to asking for votes. Equality with men in everything was demanded. The position of women in the west till quite recent times was very bad. They had few rights. English women could not even own property under the law, the husband took the lot, even his wife's earnings. They were thus even worse off legally than women are to-day under Hindu law, and that is bad enough. Women in the west were indeed a subject race, as in a host of ways Indian women are now. Long before the agitation for votes began, women had demanded equal treatment with men in other respects. At length in the eighties in England they were given some rights as to owning property. Women succeeded in this partly because factory owners favoured it; they thought that if women could keep their earnings, this would be an inducement for them to work in the factories!

On every side we note great changes, but not so in the ways of governments. The Great Powers continued to follow the methods of intrigue and deception recommended long ago by the Florentine Machiavelli, and eighteen hundred years before him by the Indian minister Chanakya. There was ceaseless rivalry between them, and secret treaties and alliances, and each power was always trying to overreach the other. Europe, as we have seen, played the active and aggressive role; Asia the passive. America's part in world politics was relatively small because of her own pre-occupations.

With the growth of the nationalism the idea of "my country right or wrong" developed, and nations gloried in doing things which, in the case of individuals, were considered bad and immoral. Thus a strange contrast grew between the morality of individuals and that of nations. There was a vast difference between

the two, and the very vices of individuals became the virtues of nations. Selfishness, greed, arrogance, vulgarity were utterly bad and intolerable in the case of individual men and women. But in the case of large groups, of nations, they were praised and encouraged under the noble cloak of patriotism and love of country. Just as we see in India to-day communal vulgarity, and selfishness, and violence, which would not be tolerated in individuals. Even murder and killing become praiseworthy if large groups or nations undertake it against one another. A recent author has told us, and he is perfectly right, that "civilization has become a device for delegating the vices of individuals to larger and larger communities".

This letter must end now. But the tale goes on in the next.

THE WORLD WAR BEGINS

March 23, 1933

I finished off my last letter by pointing out to you how vicious and immoral nations were when dealing with each other. They considered it a sign of their independence to adopt an offensive and intolerant attitude to others, wherever they could afford to do this, and a dog in the manger policy. There was no authority to tell them to believe for were they not independent, and would not interference be resented? The only check on their behaviour was fear of consequences. So the strong were respected to some extent and the weak were bullied.

This national rivalry was really an inevitable result of the growth of capitalistic industry. We have seen however growing demand for markets and raw materials made the capitalist powers race round the world for empire. They rushed about in Asia and Africa seizing as much territory as possible in order to exploit it. Having covered the world, there was nowhere else to spread, so the imperialist powers began glaring at each other and coveting each other's possessions. There were frequent clashes between these Great Powers in Asia and Africa and Europe, and angry passions glared up, and was seemed to hang in the balance. Some of the powers were better off than the others, and England with her industrial lead and vast empire seemed to be the most fortunate of all. But even England was not satisfied for the more one has the more one wants! Vast schemes of the extension of her empire floated in the brains of her 'empire builders', schemes of an African empire extending without break from north to south, from

Cairo to the Cape. England was also worried by the competition of Germany and the United States in industry. These countries were making manufactured goods cheaper than England and were thus stealing England's markets from her.

If England the fortunate was not satisfied, the others were even more dissatisfied. And especially Germany, which had joined the Great Powers rather late in the day and found all the ripe plums gone. She had made vast progress in science, education, and industry, and had at the same time built up a magnificent army. Even in social reform legislation for her workers she was ahead of other countries, including England. Although the world was largely occupied by the other imperialist powers when Germany came on the scene and the avenues of exploitation were limited, by sheer hard work and self discipline, she became the strongest and most efficient power of the age of industrialism and capitalism. Her merchant ships were to be seen in every port, and her own ports, Hamburg and Bremen, were among the greatest of world ports. The German mercantile marine not only carried German goods to distant countries; it captured also the carrying trade of other countries.

It is not surprising that this new imperial Germany with this success achieved, and fully conscious of her strength, chafed at the limitations placed on her further growth. Prussia was the leader of the German empire, and the Prussian landlord and military class which was in power has never been known for its humility. They were aggressive and took pride in being ruthlessly so, and they found an ideal leader of this assertive and bumptious spirit in their emperor Kaiser Wilhelm II of the house of Hohenzollern. The Kaiser went about proclaiming that Germany was going to be the leader of the world; that she wanted a place in the sun; that her future was on the sea; that it was her mission to spread her *kultur* or culture throughout the world.

Now all this had been said before by other people

and other nations. England's *White Man's Burden* and France's *Civilising Mission* were of the same family as Germany's *Kultur*. England claimed to be, and was in fact, supreme on the seas. The Kaiser said for Germany, rather crudely and bombastically, what many Englishmen had said for England, with this difference that England was in possession and Germany was out of it. None the less the Kaiser's bombastic utterances irritated the British extremely; the idea that any other nation should even think of becoming the leading nation in the world was extremely distasteful to them. It was a kind of heresy, an obvious attack on England which considered herself the leading nation. As for the sea, this had been considered a preserve of England ever since Napoleon's defeat at Trafalgar a hundred years ago, and to the English it seemed highly improper for Germany or any other nation to challenge this position. If Britain ceased to be strong at sea what would become of her far-flung empire?

The Kaiser's challenges and threats were bad enough; what was worse was that he actually followed it up by increasing his navy. This completely upset the tempers and nerves of the British, and they also began to increase their navy. A naval race between the two thus began, and newspapers of both countries kept up a shrieking agitation demanding more and more battle-ships and increasing national hatred.

This was one danger zone in Europe. There were many others. France and Germany were of course old rivals, and bitter memories of the defeat of 1870 rankled in the minds of the French who dreamed of revenge. The Balkans were always a powder box where various interests clashed. Germany also began to make friends with Turkey with a view to developing her influence in Western Asia. It was proposed to build a railway to Baghdad connecting this city with Constantinople and Europe. The proposal was an eminently desirable one, but because Germany wanted to control this Baghdad Railway, national jealousies were roused.

Gradually the fear of war spread in Europe and in self-defence the Powers sought alliances. The Great Powers lined up in two groups: the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria and Italy, and the Triple Entente of England, France and Russia. Italy was a very lukewarm member of the Triple Alliance and, as a matter of fact, in the event of war she broke her word and joined the other side. Austria was a ramshackle empire big on the map but full of discordant elements, with beautiful Vienna, a great centre of science and music and art, as the capital. So in effect the Triple Alliance meant Germany. But of course before the test came, no one knew how Italy and Austria would shape.

So fear reigned in Europe and fear is a terrible thing. Each country went on preparing for war and arming itself to the uttermost. There was an armament race, and the curious part of such competition is that if one country increases its armaments, the other countries are forced to do likewise. The big private firms which made armaments, that is guns, battle-ships, ammunition, and all the other material for war, naturally reaped a rich harvest and waxed fat. They went further and actually started war scares to induce countries to purchase more arms from them. These armament firms were very rich and powerful and many high officials and ministers in England, France, Germany and elsewhere held shares in them, and were thus interested in their prosperity. Prosperity to an armament firm comes with war scares and with wars! So this was the amazing position that ministers and officials of many governments were financially interested in war! These firms tried other ways also of promoting war expenditure by different countries. They brought up newspapers to influence public opinion, and often bribed government officials, and spread false reports to excite people. What a terrible thing is this armament industry which lives by the death of others, and which does not scruple to encourage and bring about the horrors of war so that it might profit out of it! This

industry helped to some extent to hasten the War of 1914. Even to-day it is playing the same game.

In the midst of this talk of war I must tell you of a curious attempt at peace. The Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, of all persons, suggested to the Powers, that they should meet together to bring about an era of universal peace. This was the Tsar who was crushing every liberal movement in his empire and peopling Siberia with his convicts! It seems almost a joke that he should talk of peace. But probably he was honest about it, for peace to him meant a perpetuation of existing conditions and his own autocracy. In response to his invitation, two Peace Conferences were held at the Hague in Holland in 1899 and 1907. Nothing of the least importance was done there. Peace cannot suddenly descend from the heavens. It can only come when the root causes of trouble are removed.

I have told you a great deal about the rivalries and fears of the Great Powers. The poor small nations are ignored, except those that misbehave! In the north of Europe there are some small countries which deserve attention because they are so very different from the greedy and grasping Great Powers. There are Norway and Sweden in Scandinavia and Denmark just below them. These countries are not far from the Arctic regions; they are cold and hard to live in. They can support only a small population. But because they are outside the Great Power circle of hatred and jealousy and rivalry, they live a peaceful life and spend their energies in civilized ways. Science flourishes there and fine literatures have grown. Norway and Sweden were joined together and formed one State till 1905. In that year Norway decided to break away and carry on a separate existence. So the two countries decided peacefully to break their bonds and since then they have been separate independent States. There was no war or attempt to compel one country by another, and both continued to live as friendly neighbours.

Little Denmark has set an example to the big

countries and small by abolishing her army and navy. It is a peasant nation, a country of small farmers, where the difference between rich and poor is not much. This equalisation is largely due to the great development of the co-operation movement there.

But all the small countries of Europe are not paragons of virtue like Denmark. Holland, small itself, still holds sway over a large empire in the East Indies (Java, Sumatra, etc.). Next to it, Belgium exploits the Congo in Africa. Its real importance, however, in European politics comes from its position. It is almost on the high way between France and Germany, and in any war between these countries, it is almost sure to be dragged in. Waterloo, you will remember, is near Brussels in Belgium. For this reason Belgium used to be called the "cockpit of Europe". The principal Great Powers came to an agreement to respect the neutrality of Belgium in case of war, but, as we shall see, when war did come this agreement and promise went to pieces.

But worst and most troublesome of all small countries in Europe or elsewhere are in the Balkans. This hotch-potch of peoples and races, with generations of animosity and rivalry behind them, is full of mutual hatred and conflict. The Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 were extraordinarily bloody, and in a short time and within a short area there were enormous losses. The Bulgarians are said to have committed horrible atrocities on the refugee and retreating Turks. The Turks themselves had a very bad record in earlier years. Serbia (now a part of Yugoslavia) developed a most sinister reputation for assassination. A secret murder gang of so-called patriots, named the *Black Hand*, and including among its members many high officials of the State, was responsible for a bunch of peculiarly horrible murders. The king and queen of the country, King Alexander and Queen Draga, together with the queen's brothers, the prime minister and some others, were all murdered in a disgusting manner. This was just a palace revolution and another person was made king.

So the twentieth century opened with thunder and lightning in the air of Europe, and as year passed year, the weather grew stormier. Complications and entanglements grew, and the life of Europe was tied up more and more in knots—knots which were to be cut ultimately by war. All the Powers expected war to come and prepared for it feverishly, and yet perhaps none of them was keen on it. They all feared it to some extent, for no one can prophesy with certainty what the result of war would be. And yet fear itself drove them on to war. As I have told you, the two sides in Europe lived up against each other. "The balance of Power" it was called, a very delicate balance which a little push could throw over! Japan, although far away from Europe, and not much interested in its local problems, was also a party to its alliances and this balance of Power. For Japan was England's ally. This alliance was meant to protect English interests in the East and especially in India. The alliance had been made in the days of Anglo-Russian rivalry. It still continued although England and Russia were now on the same side. America was the only Great Power which held aloof from this European system of alliances and balances.

So matters stood in 1914. You will remember that at this time England was having a lot of trouble in Ireland over the Home Rule Bill. Ulster was rebelling, volunteers were drilling in the north and in the south, and there was talk of Civil War in Ireland. It is very likely that the German government thought that the Irish trouble would keep England busy and that she would not interfere if a European war took place. The English government was as a matter of fact privately committed to joining France in case of war, but this was not publicly known.

June 28, 1914—that was the date on which the spark was lighted which kindled the blaze. The Archduke Francis Ferdinand was the heir to the Austrian throne. He went to visit Serajevo, the capital of Bosnia in the Balkans. This Bosnia, as I have told you, had

been annexed by Austria a few years earlier when the Young Turks were trying to get rid of their Sultan. As the Archduke, with his wife sitting by him in an open carriage, was going along the streets of Serajevo, he was shot at and both he and his wife were killed. The government and people of Austria were in a rage and accused the Serbian government (Serbia was the neighbour of Bosnia) of complicity in this crime. The Serbian government of course denied this. Enquiries made long afterwards have gone to show that the Serbian government, though not responsible for the murder, was not wholly ignorant of the preparations made for it. The responsibility for the murder must however largely rest with the Serbian *Black Hand* organisation.

The Austrian government, partly through anger and largely through policy, took up a very aggressive attitude towards Serbia. It had evidently decided to humble Serbia for good, and relied on the powerful help of Germany in case of a bigger war. So Serbian apologies were not accepted and on July 23, 1914, Austria sent a final ultimatum to Serbia. Five days later, on July 28, Austria declared war on Serbia.

Austrian policy was largely in the hands of a vain and foolish minister who was bent on war. The aged emperor Francis Joseph (who had been on the Austrian throne since 1848!) was induced to agree, and a half promise of help from Germany was construed to mean a full assurance. As a matter of fact, apart from Austria probably none of the other Great Powers was eager for war just then. Germany, with all her readiness and pugnacity, was not keen, and Kaiser Wilhelm II even tried in a half-hearted way to prevent it. England and France were not keen on war. The Russian government meant the Tsar, a weak and foolish person, surrounded by knaves and fools of his own choice, and swayed by them hither and thither. Yet in the hands of this person lay the fate of millions! He himself was on the whole averse to the war but his advisers frightened him with the consequences of delay and got him to agree

to the mobilisation of the army. This 'mobilisation' meant the calling of the troops for active service, and in a vast country like Russia, this process took time. Fear of a German attack perhaps hurried Russian mobilisation. News of this mobilisation, which took place on July 30, frightened Germany, and she demanded that Russia should stop it. But there was no stopping the huge war machine now. Two days later, on August 1, Germany mobilised and declared war on Russia and France, and almost immediately vast German armies started invading Belgium to go to France that way, as it was easier. Poor Belgium had not harmed Germany but when nations fight for life and death they care little for such trifles or for promises made. The German government had asked Belgium's permission to send its army through Belgium; such permission was naturally and indignantly refused.

A great outcry arose in England and elsewhere on account of this violation of Belgian neutrality and England made this the basis of declaring war herself against Germany. As a matter of fact England's choice had been made long ago and the question of Belgium came as a convenient excuse. It now appears that even the French army had prepared plans in the pre-War years for taking their armies across Belgium to attack Germany, should this be considered necessary. Anyhow, England tried to pose as a great defender of right and truth and a champion of small nations, as against Germany who was said to have treated her solemn promises and treaties as just "scraps of paper". At midnight on August 4, England declared war against Germany, but she had taken the precaution of sending her army—the British Expeditionary Force—across the channel secretly a day earlier to prevent any mishap. So that while the world thought that the question of England joining or not still hung in the balance, British troops were already on the continent.

Austria, Russia, Germany, France, England, were all involved in the war now, and also of course little

Serbia, who was partly the immediate cause for this outbreak. What of Italy, the ally of Germany and Austria? Italy held aloof, Italy watched to see on which side the advantage lay, Italy bargained, and ultimately, six months later, Italy definitely joined the French-English-Russian side against her old allies.

So the first days of August, 1914, saw the gathering and the marching of the armies of Europe. What were these armies? In the old days armies consisted of a number of professional soldiers. They were permanent armies. The French Revolution, however, made a great difference. When the Revolution was in danger from foreign attack the ordinary citizens were enrolled and trained in large numbers. From that time onwards there was a tendency in Europe to replace the professional voluntary armies of limited numbers by conscript armies, that is armies in which all the able-bodied men of the country were forced to serve. Thus this universal military service of the able-bodied men was a child of the French Revolution. It spread all over the continent where every young man for two years or more had to receive military training in camp and later he was bound to serve when called upon to do so. Thus an army on active war service meant practically the whole of the male youth of the nation. This was so in France, Germany, Austria and Russia, and mobilisation in these countries meant the calling up of these young men from their homes in distant towns and villages. In England there was no universal service of this kind when the war began. Relying on her powerful navy she kept a relatively small permanent and voluntary army. During the war, however, she fell into line with the other countries and introduced conscription, or compulsory military service.

This universal military service meant that the whole nation was in arms. The orders of mobilisation affected every town, every village, every family. In the greater part of Europe, life suddenly stood still in those early days of August, and young men left their

million homes never to return. Everywhere there was a marching and a tramping, and cheers for the troops, and tremendous displays of patriotic fervour, and a tightening of the heart strings, and also a certain light-heartedness, for the horrors of the years to come was little realised then.

This passionate patriotism swept everybody away. The socialists, who had talked so loudly of internationalism, the Marxists, who had called on the workers of the world to unite against the common enemy capitalism, were themselves swept off their feet and joined this capitalists' war as fervent patriots. Some few held their ground but they were despised and cursed and often punished. Most people went mad with hatred of the enemy. While English and German workers killed each other, the learned men and scientists and professors of both countries, as well as of other warring countries, cursed each other, and believed the most horrible stories about each other.

So with the coming of the War ended the epoch of the nineteenth century. The majestic and calmly flowing river of western civilization was suddenly swallowed up in the whirlpool of war. The old world was gone for ever. Something new emerged from that whirlpool more than four years afterwards.

INDIA ON THE EVE OF THE WAR

March 29, 1933

It is long since I wrote to you about India. I feel tempted to come back to this subject and to tell you how India fared on the eve of the War period. I have decided to give in to the temptation!

In several long letters we have already examined some aspects of Indian life and of British rule in India during the nineteenth century. The dominant feature of this period appears to be the strengthening of the British hold on India and the accompanying exploitation of the country. India was held down by a triple army of occupation—military, civil and commercial. The British military forces, and the Indian mercenary army under British officers, were obvious enough as an alien army of occupation. But an even more powerful hold was that of the civil service, an irresponsible and highly centralised bureaucracy; and the third army, the commercial one, was supported by these two and was the most dangerous of all, as most of the exploitation was done by this, or on its behalf, and its ways of exploiting the country were not so obvious as those of the other two. Indeed for a long time, and to some extent even now, eminent Indians objected far more to the first two, and did not seem to attach the same importance to the third.

One of the consistent aims of British policy in India was to create vested interests which, being of their own making, would rely upon them and become their supports in India. In this way the feudal princes were strengthened and the big zamindar and taluqdar class created, and even social conservatism encouraged in the

name of religious non-interference. All these vested interests were themselves interested in the exploitation of the country and indeed could exist only because of this exploitation. The biggest vested interest created in India was that of British capital.

A statement made by an English statesman, Lord Salisbury, who was Secretary of State for India, has often been quoted, and, as it is illuminating, I shall give it to you here. He said in 1875: "As India must be bled, the lancet should be directed to the parts where the blood is congested, or at least is sufficient, not to those which are already feeble from want of it."

The British occupation of India and the policy they pursued here produced many results, some of which were not welcome to the British. But even individuals can seldom control all the results of their actions, much less can nations. Often enough among the results of certain activities are new forces which oppose those very activities, and fight them, and overcome them. Imperialism produces nationalism; capitalism produces large aggregations of working men in factories, who unite and combat the capitalist owners. Government repression meant to stifle a movement and suppress a people actually results often in strengthening and steeling them, and thus preparing them for final victory.

We have seen that British industrial policy in India led to increasing ruralisation, that is, more and more people, having no other occupations, drifted back from the towns to the villages. The burden on the land grew, and the holdings of the peasantry, that is, the area of their farms or fields, ever grew smaller. Most of these holdings became "uneconomic", which means that they were not big enough to give the cultivator the minimum income for even the bare necessities of life. But he had no alternative; he could only carry on usually getting more and more into debt. The land policy of the British government made matters worse, especially in the *talukdari* and big *zamindari* areas. Both in these areas and in the areas where peasant

proprietorship prevailed, peasants were turned off from their holdings for non-payment of revenue to government or rent to the zamindar. As a result of this and because of the continual pressure of new comers for land, a large class of landless labourers grew up in the rural areas, and there were, as I have told you, many dreadful famines.

This large dispossessed class was hungry for land to cultivate, but there was not enough land to go round. In the *zamindari* areas the landlords took advantage of this demand by raising rents. Some tenancy laws made to protect the tenant prohibited the sudden raising of rents beyond a certain percentage. But these were got over in a variety of ways and all manner of illegal dues were charged. In an Oudh *talukadari* estate I was told once of over fifty different kinds of illegal dues! The chief of these was *nazrāna*, a kind of premium which is paid by the tenant right at the beginning. How can the poor tenants make these various payments? They can only do so by borrowing from the *bania*, the village banker. It is folly to borrow when there is no prospect of or ability to pay back. But what is the poor peasant to do? He sees no hope anywhere; at any cost he wants land to till, hoping against hope that something will turn up. The result is that often enough in spite of his borrowings he cannot meet the demands of the landlord, and he is ejected from his holding, and again joins the class of landless labourers.

Both the peasant proprietor and the tenant, as well as many a landless labour, become victims of the *bania*. They can never get rid of the debt. Whenever they earn a little they pay, but the interest swallows this up and the old debt remains. There are very few checks on the *bania* fleecing them. In effect they become bound down to him as serfs. The poor tenant is in a way doubly a serf—the zamindar's and the bania's.

Obviously this kind of thing cannot continue for very long. A time will come when the peasants are wholly unable to meet any of the demands made upon

them, and the *bania* refuses to advance more money, and the zamindar also is hard hit. It is a system which on the face of it has elements of decay and instability. The recent agrarian troubles we have had all over the country would seem to point out that the system is cracking up now and cannot long survive. Patch-work here and there will not save it, if the structure has outlived its day. What is required is a new land system entirely. The fault lies with the system, not in *banias* and zamindars.

I am afraid I have been repeating in this letter what I have said, a trifle differently perhaps, in a previous letter. But I wish you to appreciate that India means these millions of unhappy agriculturists, and not a handful of middle class folk who fill the picture. I am afraid many of us forget this.

The existence of a large dispossessed class of landless labourers made the starting of big factories easy. Such factories can only be run if there are enough people (indeed more than enough) who are prepared to work for wages. The man who has got a bit of land does not want to leave it. Large numbers of landless unemployed are therefore necessary for the factory system, and the more there are the easier it is for the factory owners to beat down wages and control them. That is why I said above that more than enough people were necessary.

Just about this time, as I think I have told you already, a new middle class gradually arose in India and accumulated some capital for investment. So that as the money was there and the labour was there, the result was factories. But most of the capital invested in India was foreign (British) capital. These factories were not encouraged by the British government. They went contrary to its policy of keeping India a purely agricultural country providing England with raw materials and consuming England's manufactured goods. But the conditions, which I have pointed out above, were such that big machine production had to begin in India and the British government could not easily

stop it. So factories grew in spite of the government's disapproval. One of the ways of showing this disapproval was a tax on machinery entering India, another was the Cotton Excise duty, a tax actually on what Indian cotton mills produced.

The greatest of the early Indian industrialists was Jamshedji Nasarwanji Tata. He started many industries; the biggest of these was the Tata Iron and Steel Co. at Sakchi in Behar. This was started in 1907 and it began to function in 1912. The iron industry is one of the 'basic' industries as they are called. So much depends on iron nowadays that a country without an iron industry is largely dependent on others. The Tata iron works are a huge affair. The village of Sakchi has now become the city of Jamshedpur, and the railway station a little way off is called Tatanagar. Iron works are especially valuable in war time as they can produce munitions of war. It was fortunate for the British government in India that the Tata works were working when the World War began.

Labour conditions in Indian factories were very bad. They resembled the conditions in English factories of the early nineteenth century. The wages were low because of the large numbers of unemployed landless people, and the hours of work were very long. In 1911 the first general Indian Factory Act was passed. Even this act fixed a twelve-hour day for men, and six hours for children.

These factories did not swallow up all the landless labourers. Large numbers went to tea and other plantations in Assam and other parts of India. The conditions under which they served in these plantations made them, for the time they were there, serfs of their employers.

Over two millions of poverty-stricken Indian workers emigrated to foreign countries. Most of them went to the plantations of Ceylon and Malay. Many also went to the islands of Mauritius (in the Indian Ocean off Madagascar), Trinidad (just north of South

America) and Fiji (near Australia); and to South Africa, East Africa and British Guiana (in South America). To many of these places they went as 'indentured' workers, which meant practically that they were serfs. The 'indenture' was the document which contained the contract made with these workers, and under which they were the slaves of their employers. Many horrible accounts of the indenture system reaching India, especially from Fiji, there was an agitation here and the system was abolished.

So much for the peasantry, labour, and the emigrants. These were the poor, silent and long suffering masses of India. The really vocal class was the new middle class, which was practically a child of the British connection, but which none the less began criticising it. It grew and with it grew the national movement which, you will remember, came to a head in 1907-8, when a mass movement shook Bengal and the National Congress split up into two factions—the Extremists and the Moderates. The British followed their usual policy of crushing the advanced group and trying to win over the moderate group with some minor reforms. At this time also a new factor appears on the scene—the political claims for separate and special treatment of the Muslims as a minority. It is well known now that the government encouraged these demands then, in order to create a division among Indians and thus check the growth of nationalism.

For the moment the British government succeeded in its policy. Lokamanya Tilak was in prison and his party suppressed; the moderates had cordially welcomed some reforms in the administration (called the Minto-Morley reforms from the name of the Viceroy and the Secretary of State at the time) which gave no power to the Indians. A little later the annulment of the Partition of Bengal appeased Bengali sentiment. The political movement of 1907 and onwards, became again the spare time hobby of armchair people. So that in 1914 when the war came there was little active political

life in the country. The National Congress, representing the moderates only, met once a year and passed some academic resolutions, and did nothing else. Nationalism was at a low ebb.

Apart from the political field there had been other reactions from contact with the West. The religious ideas of the new middle classes (but not of the masses) were influenced and new movements arose like the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj, and the caste system began to lose its rigidity. There was a cultural awakening also, especially in Bengal. Bengali writers made the Bengali language the richest of India's modern languages, and Bengal produced one of the greatest of our countrymen of this age, the poet Rabindra Nath Tagore, who is still happily with us. Bengal also produced great men of science: Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose and Sir Prafulla Chandra Ray. Another great Indian scientist whose name I might mention here (although he is much younger) is Sir Chandra Shekhara Venkata Raman. All these names are known the world over. India was thus excelling in the very thing, science, which had been the foundation of Europe's greatness.

One other name I might mention here also. It is of Sir Muhammad Iqbal, a poet of genius in Urdu and especially Persian. He has written some beautiful poetry of nationalism. Unhappily he seems to have left poetry in recent years and devoted himself to other work.

While India was politically dormant in the pre-war years, a far country saw a gallant and a unique struggle for India's honour. This was South Africa where large numbers of Indian labourers and some merchants had emigrated. They were humiliated and ill treated in a host of ways for racial arrogance reigned supreme there. It so happened that a young Indian barrister was taken to South Africa to appear in a law case. He saw the condition of his fellow countrymen and he was humiliated and distressed by it. He resolved to do his best to help them. For many years he laboured quietly,

giving up his profession and his belongings and devoting himself entirely to the cause he had espoused. This man was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Every child in India knows him and loves him to-day, but he was little known then outside South Africa. Suddenly his name flashed across to India and people talked of him and of his brave fight with surprise and admiration and pride. The South African Government had tried to humiliate the Indian residents there still more and under Bapu's leadership they had refused to submit. This was strange enough, that a community of poor down-trodden ignorant workers and a group of petty merchants, far from their home country, should take up this brave attitude. What was stranger was the method they had adopted for this was a novel one, as a political weapon, in the world's history. We have heard of it often enough since. It was Bapu's *satyagraha*, which means holding on to truth. It is sometimes called passive resistance but that is not a correct translation, for it is active enough. It is not non-resistance merely, though *ahimsa* or non-violence is an essential part of it. Bapu startled India and South Africa with this non-violent warfare and people in India learnt with a thrill of pride and joy of the thousands of our countrymen and women who went willingly to gaol in South Africa. In our hearts we were ashamed of our subjection and our impotence in our own country, and this instance of a brave challenge on behalf of our own people increased our own self-respect. Suddenly India became politically awake on this issue, and money poured into South Africa. The fight was stopped when Bapu and the South African Government came to terms. Although it was an undoubted victory for the Indian cause at the time, many Indian disabilities have continued, and the old agreement, it is said, has not been kept by the South African Government. The question of Indians overseas is still with us and it will remain with us till India is free. How can Indians have honour elsewhere when they have not got it in their own country? And how

can we help them much so long as we have not succeeded in helping ourselves to freedom in our own country?

So matters stood in India in the pre-war years. When Turkey was attacked by Italy in 1911 there was much sympathy for Turkey in India, for Turkey was looked upon as an Asiatic and oriental power and as such had the good-will of all Indians. Indian Muslims were especially affected because they looked upon the Sultan of Turkey as the Caliph or Khalifa or head of Islam. In those days there had also been some talk, fathered by Sultan Abdul Hamid of Turkey, of Pan-Islam. The Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 agitated Indian Muslims even more and as a gesture of friendship and good-will a medical mission, called the Red Crescent Mission, went from India to give assistance to the Turkish wounded. Our very good friend, Dr. M. A. Ansari, was the leader of this mission.

Soon after, the World War began and Turkey became involved in it as an enemy of England. But that takes us to the war period and I must stop here.

WAR 1914—1918

March 31, 1933

What shall I write to you about this War, the World War, the Great War, as it is called, which for over four years devastated Europe and some parts of Asia and Africa, and wiped away millions of young men in their prime? War is not a pleasant subject to contemplate. It is an ugly thing, but often it is praised and painted in bright colours; and it is said that, like the fire which purifies precious metals, war purifies and strengthens indolent nations, grown soft and corrupt by too much ease and love of living. Instances of high courage and moving sacrifice are pointed out to us, as if war was the parent of these virtues.

I have tried to examine with you some of the causes of this war: how the greed of capitalistic industrial countries, the rivalries of imperialist powers, clashed, and made conflict inevitable. How the leaders of industry in each of these countries wanted more and more opportunities and areas to exploit; how financiers wanted to make more money; how the makers of armaments wanted bigger profits. So these people plunged into the war, and, at their bidding, and that of elderly politicians representing them and their class, the youth of the nations rushed at each other's throats. The vast majority of these young men, and the common people of all the countries concerned, knew nothing of these causes which had led to the war. They were really not concerned, and whether success came or failure, they stood to lose by it. It was a rich man's game played with the lives of the people, and mostly the young. But there could be no war unless the common people were

prepared to fight. In all the continental countries, as I have told you, there was no conscription or compulsory service; it came later in the war. But even compulsion cannot force all the people in such a matter if they are really unwilling as a whole.

So, elaborate efforts were made to whip up the enthusiasm and the love of country of the people in all the warring nations. Each party called the other the 'aggressor', and pretended to fight in self-defence only. Germany said that she was surrounded by a ring of enemies who were trying to strangle her. She accused Russia and France of taking the initiative in invading her. England based her action on a righteous defence of little Belgium, whose neutrality had been grossly violated by Germany. All the countries involved took up a self-righteous attitude and laid all the blame on the enemy. Each people were made to believe that their freedom was in danger and they must fight to defend it. The newspapers especially took a great part in creating this war atmosphere everywhere, which meant in effect bitter hatred of the people of the enemy countries.

So strong was this wave of hysteria that it swept everything before it. It was easy enough to rouse mass passions in the crowd; but even people of intellect and intelligence, men and women who were supposed to have a calm and equable temperament, thinkers, writers, professors, scientists—all of them, in all the countries involved, lost their balance and became filled with blood-lust and hatred of the enemy peoples. The clergymen, the men of religion, who are supposed to be men of peace, were as bloodthirsty, or even more, than the others. Even pacifists and socialists lost their heads and forgot their principles. All—but not quite all. A tiny minority of people in each country refused to become hysterical, and would not allow themselves to be smitten by this war fever. They were jeered at and called cowards and many were even sent to prison for refusal to do war service. Some of these were socialists, some

were religious people, like the Quakers, who have conscientious objections to war. It has been truly said that when war breaks out nowadays the people involved go mad.

As soon as the war began, the governments of the various countries made it the excuse for suppressing truth and spreading all manner of lies. The personal liberties of the people were also suppressed. The other side was of course completely shut out. So that the people only got to know one side of the story and that a greatly distorted, and often a completely false, account. It was not difficult to fool the people in this way.

Even in peace time narrow nationalist propaganda and the distortions of newspapers had fooled the people and prepared the ground for war. War itself had been glorified. In Germany, or rather in Prussia, this glorification of war became the definite philosophy of the rulers from the Kaiser downwards. Learned books were written to justify it and to prove that war was a "biological necessity", that is, it was necessary to human life and progress. The Kaiser received a lot of publicity because he was always posing rather crudely in the lime-light. But similar ideas prevailed in military and other upper class circles in England and other countries. Ruskin is one of the great writers of the nineteenth century in England. He is a favourite author of Bapu's, and probably you have read some of his books. This man of undoubted nobility of mind has written in one of his books:

I found, in brief, that all great nations learned their truth of words, and strength of thought, in war, and wasted by peace; taught by war, and deceived by peace; trained by war and betrayed by peace; in a word, that they were born in war, and expired in peace.

To show what a frank imperialist Ruskin was, I shall give you another quotation from him:

That is what she (England) must do or perish: she must found colonies seizing every piece of fruitful waste ground she can set foot on, and there teaching these her

colonists that their first.....aim is to advance the power of England by land or sea.

And one other quotation. This is from the book of an English officer who became a major-general in the British army. He points out that victory in war is almost impossible "except by deliberate falsehood, by acting a falsehood, or by prevarication". According to him, any citizen who "refuses to adopt these measuresdeliberately acts the part of a traitor to his comrades and subordinates" and "can only be termed a most despicable coward". "Morality; immorality—what are such things to great nations when their fate is at stake?" A nation "must strike and strike again until its adversary receives its death-blow". I wonder what Ruskin would have said to all this! Do not imagine, of course, that this is a fair specimen of the English mind, or that the Kaiser's bombastic utterances represented the average German. But the misfortune is that people who think so are often in authority, and in war time, almost invariably, they come to the front.

Usually such frank avowals are not made publicly, and war is made to put on a sanctimonious garb. So, while a tremendous killing was going on over hundreds of miles of battlefront in Europe and elsewhere, fine high-sounding phrases were manufactured at home to justify the killing and delude the people. It was a war for freedom and honour; the "war to end war"; to make democracy safe; for self-determination, and the freedom of small nations, and so on. Meanwhile many of the financiers and industrialists and makers of war material, who sat at home, and patriotically used these fine phrases to induce the young to jump into the furnace of war, made vast profits and became millionaires.

As the war went on from month to month and year to year, more and more countries were dragged into it. Both sides tried to win over neutrals by offering bribes secretly; any such public offer would have put an end to the high ideals and the fine phrases which were shouted from the house-tops. The power of

England and France to bribe was greater than that of Germany, and so most of the neutrals who joined the war came on the Anglo-French-Russian side. Italy, the old ally of Germany, was won over by these Allies on their making a secret treaty promising her territory in Asia Minor and elsewhere. Another secret treaty promised Russia Constantinople. It was a pleasant task to divide up the world among themselves. These secret treaties were wholly opposed to the public statements of the statesmen of the allies. Probably no one would have known of these treaties if the Russian Bolsheviks, when they seized power, had not published them.

Ultimately there were a dozen or more countries on the side of the Allies (I shall call the Anglo-French side the allies for short). These were Britain and her empire, France, Russia, Italy, the United States of America, Belgium, Serbia, Japan, China, Rumania, Greece and Portugal. (There may be one or two more which I do not remember). On the German side were Germany, Austria, Turkey and Bulgaria. The United States came into the war in the third year. Even leaving them out of consideration for the time, it is obvious that the resources of the Allies were far greater than those of the German side. They had more men, far more money, more factories to make arms and munitions, and, above all, they had command of the seas, which made it easy for them to draw upon the resources of the neutral world. Thus the Allies could get war material or food or borrow money from America because of this sea power. Germany and her allies were surrounded and hemmed in by their enemies; and Germany's allies were weak countries which did not help much. They were often a drain on Germany and had to be propped up by her. So, practically, it was Germany alone against the greater part of the world in arms. It seems, from every point of view, a most unequal contest. And yet Germany held the world at bay for four years and repeatedly came near to victory. Year after year victory seemed to hang in the balance.

It was an amazing effort for one nation and it was only possible because of the magnificent military machine that Germany had built up. To the end, when Germany and her allies had been finally vanquished, the German army was still intact and much of it was on foreign territory.

On the side of the Allies the brunt of the fighting fell on the French army, and it was the French who, at tremendous cost of young lives, withstood the German military machine. England's great contribution was the navy and sea power, and also diplomacy and propaganda. Germany, proud of her army, was singularly crude in her diplomacy with neutral countries and in her methods of propaganda. There is no doubt that of all countries during the war England took the palm in the efficiency and thoroughness of her propaganda of falsehood and distorted fact. Russia and Italy and the other allied countries played a comparatively minor, and not a distinguished, role in the fighting. And yet the Russian losses were perhaps the greatest of all countries. The United States, coming in towards the end, played the final decisive role in crushing Germany.

In the early months of the war there was great tension between England and America, and even war between them was mentioned. The friction was due to England's interference with American shipping on the seas, which she suspected of carrying goods to Germany. But then the British propaganda machine got busy and made a special effort to win over America. The first thing taken in hand was atrocity propaganda, and horrible stories of what the German army had done in Belgium were circulated. 'Frightfulness' of the German *Hun* or *Bosche* this was called. A few of these stories had some basis in fact, as the destruction of the university and library of Louvain, but most of them were pure inventions. There was one amazing story of a corpse factory which the Germans were said to run! And yet, such was the hatred of the enemy peoples for each other that they would believe anything.

You can form some idea of the vast scale on which British propaganda was carried on when I tell you that the British War Mission to America consisted of five hundred officials and ten thousand assistants! This was official; besides this a tremendous amount of unofficial work was done. All methods, fair and foul, were adopted for this propaganda work. In Stockholm in Sweden the British officially started a kind of English music hall, giving a variety of entertainment, to win the good-will of the Swedes!

This propaganda, as well as the German submarine activities, about which I shall tell you something later, went a long way in bringing America to the side of the Allies. But the decisive factor was ultimately money.

War is an expensive business, a terribly expensive business. It swallows up mountains of valuable material and only has devastation to show for it. It stops most wealth producing activities and concentrates people's energy on destruction. Where was all this money to come from? To begin with, on the side of the Allies, only England and France might be considered well off. They paid not only their own cost of the war but also paid for their allies by lending money and material to them. After some time Paris gave way; its financial resources were exhausted. London then financed the allied side of the war alone. By the end of the second year of the war London also gave way. So towards the end of 1916 both French and English credit was at an end. Then an English mission consisting of their most prominent statesmen went to America to beg for financial help. America agreed to lend money and thence forward it was American money that carried on the war on the side of the Allies. The debt of the Allies to America grew by leaps and bounds to amazing figures, and, as it grew, the big banks and the financiers in America, who had lent the money, became more and more interested in an Allied victory. If the allies were defeated by Germany what would happen to the vast sums that America had lent to them? The American

banker's pocket was touched and he reacted accordingly. Sentiment in favour of America joining the Allies in the war was developed, and ultimately America did so.

We hear a great deal about the American debt question now, and the newspapers are full of it. This debt which hangs like a millstone round the necks of England and France, and which they cannot pay now, was piled up in the days of the war. If that money had not been forthcoming at the time, their credit would have collapsed completely, and perhaps America would not have joined them.

I shall stop here now. In my next letter I shall tell you something about the course of the war and how it ended.

THE COURSE OF THE WAR

April 1, 1933

When the war began, early in August, 1914, all the world looked at Belgium and the northern frontier of France. The vast German armies were marching on and on, sweeping away all the obstructions that came in their path. For a short while they were stopped by little Belgium and, angered at this, they tried to frighten the Belgians by acts of terrorism, which formed the basis of the atrocity stories of the Allies. They went on towards Paris, and the French army seemed to roll up in front of them and the small British army was swept aside. Within a month of the outbreak of the war Paris seemed to be doomed, and the French government actually prepared to take its offices and valuables south to Bordeaux. Some Germans thought that they had practically won the war. Matters stood thus on the western front (that is the French front) of the war at the end of August.

Meanwhile Russian troops were invading East Prussia, and an attempt was made somehow to distract German attention from the western front. In France and England great hopes were placed in the Russian "steamroller", as it was called, rolling on to Berlin. But the Russian soldiers were badly armed and their officers were thoroughly incompetent, and behind them was the Tsar's corrupt government. Suddenly the Germans turned on them, and trapped a huge Russian army in the lakes and marshes of East Prussia, and destroyed it utterly. The battle of Tannenburg is the name given to this tremendous German victory, and one of the chief general associated with it was Von Hindenburg, who is

the president of the German Republic now.

It was a great victory, and yet it cost the German armies a great deal indirectly. In order to achieve it, and frightened a little by the Russian advance in the East, they had transferred some of their armies from the French side to the Russian. This had relieved the pressure on the western front somewhat, and the French army made a mighty effort to hurl back the invading Germans. At the battle of the Marne, early in September, 1914, they succeeded in pushing back the Germans about fifty miles. Paris was saved and the French and the English had some breathing time.

The Germans made another attempt to break through and nearly succeeded, but they were held. Both armies then dug themselves in, and a new kind of fighting, trench warfare, began. It was a kind of stalemate, and for over three years, and to some extent almost to the end of the war, this trench warfare continued on the western front, and huge armies dug themselves in like moles, and tried to exhaust each other. The German and French armies at this front ran into millions from the very beginning. The little British army, also at this front, grew rapidly till it could also be counted by the million.

On the eastern or Russian front there was more movement. Russian troops repeatedly defeated the Austrians but were themselves invariably defeated by the Germans. The losses and casualties at this front were colossal. Do not imagine that at the western front, because of trench warfare, the losses were much less. The lives of men were treated with amazing unconcern, and hundreds of thousands were hurled to certain death in repeated attacks on the entrenched positions with little result.

There were many other theatres of war. The Turks tried to attack the Suez Canal but were repulsed. Egypt, as I have previously told you, was declared a British Protectorate in December, 1914, and forthwith Britain suspended the new Legislative Assembly and

filled the prisons with people they suspected. Nationalist newspapers were suppressed, and not more than five persons were allowed to meet. The censorship introduced there was described by the *London Times* as "savagely ruthless". The country was indeed under martial law for the whole of the war period.

Britain attacked Turkey in many weak places of her ramshackle empire; in Iraq and, later on, in Palestine and Syria. In Arabia the national sentiment of the Arabs was taken advantage of by the British, and an Arab revolt against Turkey organised with the help of liberal bribes of money and material. Colonel T. E. Lawrence, a British agent in Arabia, was largely responsible for this revolt, and he has since developed a reputation as a mysterious person, acting behind the scenes of many movements in Asia.

But the direct attack on the heart of Turkey began in February, 1915, when the British fleet tried to force the Dardanelles and thus to capture Constantinople. If they had succeeded in this, they would not only have put an end to Turkey in the war but cut off all German influence from Western Asia. But they failed. The Turks put up a brave fight and, it is interesting to note, Mustafa Kemal Pasha had a great share in this. For nearly a year the British carried on this attempt in Gallipoli; after great losses they retired.

The German colonies in west and east Africa were also attacked by the Allies. These colonies were quite cut off from Germany and could not receive help. Gradually they succumbed. In China the German concession of Kianchan was easily taken possession of by Japan. Japan, indeed, had a very easy time as there was little doing in the Far East. So she tried to improve the occasion by bullying and threatening China into giving her all manner of valuable concessions and privileges!

Italy, for many months, watched the course of the war and tried to make out which side would win. Having decided at last that the chances of victory lay with the Allies, she agreed to the bribes they offered her

and a secret pact was concluded. In May, 1915, Italy formally joined the Allies in the war. For two years the Italians and the Austrians pegged away at each other without great results. Then the Germans came to help the Austrians, and the Italians collapsed before them. The German-Austrians almost came up to Venice.

Bulgaria joined Germany in October, 1915. Soon after this the Austro-German army, co-operating with Bulgaria, crushed Serbia completely. The Serbian ruler with the remnants of his army had to leave the country and take refuge in Allied ships, and Serbia came under German rule.

Rumania had a special reputation for opportunism after its conduct in the Balkan wars. For two years she watched the course of the Great War and, ultimately, in August, 1916, she threw in her lot with the Allies. Swift punishment came upon her, and the German army swept down upon her and crushed all resistance. Rumania also passed under Austro-German occupation.

So the Central Powers, Germany and Austria, came to occupy Belgium and a part of France in the north east, and Poland, Serbia, and Rumania. In many of the minor theatres of the war they had triumphed. But the heart of the struggle lay on the western front and on the seas, and they were making no progress there. On that front the rival armies lay locked in the embrace of death. On the seas the Allies were supreme. Some German cruisers in the early days of the war had roamed about interfering with the shipping of the Allies. One of these was the famous *Emden*, which even bombarded Madras. But this was a petty diversion which made no difference to the fact that the Allies controlled the sea routes. And with the help of this control they had tried to cut off the Central Powers from all food and other material from outside. This blockade of Germany and Austria was a terrible ordeal for them for food grew scarce and hunger stared the whole population in the face.

Germany, on the other hand, started sinking the

ships of the Allies by means of submarines. This submarine warfare was so successful that England's food supply was reduced and there was danger of famine. In May, 1915, a German submarine sunk the great English Atlantic liner *Lusitania*, and a large number of people were drowned in this. Many Americans went down in it also, and there was much indignation in America because of it.

Germany also attacked England by the air. Huge Zeppelin airships came on moonlit nights to throw bombs on London and places where there were munition factories. Later, aeroplanes did this bombing; and it became quite a usual thing for the whirring of the planes to be heard, and the firing of the anti-aircraft guns, and the people rushing down to cellars and underground places to protect themselves. The British people were very indignant at this bombing of civilian populations. They were rightly indignant for it is a horrible thing. But there is little indignation in Britain when British aeroplanes drop bombs, and especially those devilish inventions 'the time-delayed bombs', in the North-West Frontier of India or in Iraq. This is called police work and is done even in so-called peace time.

So the war went on, month after month, consuming human lives as a forest fire consumes hordes of locusts, and as it went on, it became more destructive and barbarous. The Germans introduced poison gas and soon both sides were using it. Aeroplanes came into greater use as bomb throwers, and then came, first on the British side, the 'tanks', huge mechanical monsters, crawling over everything like caterpillars. Men died by the hundred thousand on the fronts and behind them in the home countries, women and children suffered from hunger and privation. In Germany and Austria especially, because of the blockade, starvation grew terrible. It became a test of endurance. Which side would outlast the other in this ordeal? Would either army wear out the other? Would the Allied blockade of Germany break her spirit? Or would the

German submarine campaign starve England and break her spirit and morale? Behind each country lay a gigantic record of sacrifice and suffering. Was all this terrible sacrifice and suffering in vain, people thought? Are we to forget our dead and give in to the enemy? The pre-war days seemed remote, even the causes of the war were forgotten; only one thing remained to obsess the minds of men and women, the desire for revenge and victory.

*"Je ne veux que voir la victoire,
Ne me demandez pas: "Après".
Après, je veux bien la nuit noire
Et le sommeil sous les cyprès.*

So wrote the French poet, Edmond Rostand, and as it happened his wish was literally fulfilled. He died within three weeks of the 'victoire'.

The call of the dead, who have sacrificed themselves in a cause they held dear, is a terrible thing. Who that has any spirit in him or her can resist it? Darkness reigned everywhere during these last years of war, and there was sorrow in every home in the warring countries, and a weariness, and disillusion, yet what could one do but hold the torch aloft? Read this moving poem, written by a British officer, Major McCrae, and try to imagine how it must have affected the men and women of his race who read it in those black and dreary war days. And remember that similar poems were written in various countries and in many languages.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders Fields.

*"I only desire to see Victory
Ask me not what next?
Afterwards I should prefer the Sombre night
And sleep beneath the cypresses".

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The Torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though Poppies grow
In Flanders Fields.

Towards the end of 1916 the advantage seemed to lie on the side of the Allies. Their new tanks had given them the initiative on the western front; the Zeppelin airships raiding England met with disasters; enough food managed to reach England on neutral ships in spite of German submarines. In May, 1916, a naval battle had taken place in the North Sea (the battle of Jutland) which was on the whole a success for the British. Meanwhile, the blockade of Germany was bringing starvation nearer to the Austro-German people. Time seemed to be against the Central Powers and quick results were considered necessary. Germany had even sent out some feelers for peace but the allies would have none of them; the Allied governments were too much committed by their secret treaties for the division of various countries to be satisfied with anything short of complete victory. Woodrow Wilson, the president of the United States, had also made some unsuccessful efforts to bring about peace.

The German leaders thereupon decided to intensify submarine warfare and thus starve England into submission. They proclaimed in January, 1917, that they would sink even neutral ships in certain waters. This was to prevent these neutrals from taking food to England. This announcement offended America greatly; she could not tolerate her ships being sunk in this way. It made her entry into the war inevitable, and indeed the German government must have known this when they made their decision about unrestricted submarining. Perhaps they had felt that there was no alternative left for them and the risk had to be taken. Or they might have thought that, as it was, American financiers were giving enough help to the Allies. In any event, the

United States declared war in April, 1917, and their entry, with their vast resources and fresh condition when all the other nations were jaded, made it certain that the German powers would be defeated.

And yet, even before America had declared war, another event of vital importance had taken place. On March 15, 1917, the first Russian Revolution had resulted in the abdication of the Tsar. I shall write to you about this revolution separately. What I wish you to note now is that this revolution made a tremendous difference to the war. Russia obviously could not fight much now, if at all, against the German powers; and this meant that Germany was relieved of all anxiety in the eastern front. She could transfer all or most of the eastern armies to the western front and hurl them on the French and British. Suddenly the position had become very favourable to Germany. If she had only known of the Russian revolution six or seven weeks before it occurred, what a difference it would have made? It might have meant no change in submarine warfare and therefore, perhaps, America remaining neutral. With Russia out of the lists and America neutral, it was highly likely that Germany would crush the British and French armies. Even as it was German strength in the western front grew, and there was also a prodigious destruction of shipping, allied and neutral, by German submarines.

The Russian Revolution seemed to help Germany. And yet it turned out to be one of the greatest causes of internal weakness. Within eight months of the first revolution came the second revolution which gave power to the Soviets and the Bolsheviks, whose slogan was peace. They addressed the workers and soldiers of all warring nations and appealed for peace; they pointed out that it was a capitalists' war and the workers must not allow themselves to be used as common-fodder for the advancement of imperialist aims. Some of these voices and appeals reached the soldiers of other nations at the front and they produced a considerable impression.

There were many mutinies in the French army which the authorities just managed to suppress. The effect on German soldiers was even greater for many regiments had actually fraternised with the Russian army after the revolution. When these regiments were transferred to the western front they carried this new message with them and spread it among other regiments. Germany was war-weary and utterly disheartened, and the seeds from Russia fell on ground that was prepared to receive them. In this way the Russian Revolution made Germany weak internally.

But the German military authorities were blind to these portents, and in March, 1918, they forced a crushing and humiliating peace on Soviet Russia. The Soviets accepted because they had no alternative and they wanted peace at any price. In March, 1918, also the German army made its last mighty effort in the western front. The Germans broke through the Anglo-French line, destroying armies in the process, and again reached the river Marne, from which they had been pushed back three and a half years before. It was a great effort, but it was the last one and Germany was exhausted. Meanwhile, armies came from America across the Atlantic, and, learning from bitter experience, all the Allied armies on the western front—British, American, French—were put under one supreme command, so that there may be the fullest co-operation and unity of effort. The French Marshall Foch was made the Generalissimo of the whole Allied army in the west. By the middle of 1918 the tide had definitely turned; the initiative and the offensive was with the Allies, and they marched on, pushing the Germans back. By October the end was near and there was talk of an armistice.

On November 4, there was a German naval mutiny at Kiel, and five days later the German Republic was proclaimed in Berlin. The same day, November 9, the Kaiser Wilhelm II made an unseemly and ignominious exit from Germany to Holland, and with him passed

away the house of Hohenzollern. Like the Manchus in China "they had come in with the roar of a tiger, to disappear like the tail of a snake".

On November 11, 1918, the armistice was signed and the war was at an end. This armistice was based on "Fourteen Points" which President Wilson of America had formulated. They were framed to a large extent on the principles of self-determination for the small nationalities involved, disarmament, no secret diplomacy, Russia to be helped by the Powers, and a League of Nations. We shall see later how many of these Fourteen Points were conveniently forgotten by the victors.

The war was over. But the blockade of Germany by England's fleet continued and food was not allowed to reach the starving German women and children. This amazing exhibition of hatred and desire to punish even the little children was supported by reputable British statesmen and public men, by great newspapers, even by so-called liberal journals. Indeed the prime minister of England then was a Liberal, Lloyd George. The record of the four and quarter years of war is full of mad brutalities and atrocities. And yet perhaps nothing exceeds this continuation of the blockade of Germany after the armistice in sheer cold blooded brutality. The war was over, and still a whole nation was starving and its little children were suffering terribly from hunger, and food was deliberately and forcibly kept away. How war distorts our minds and fills them with mad hatred? Bethman Hollweg, the old chancellor of Germany, said that "our children, and our children's children, will bear traces of the blockade that England enforced against us, a refinement of cruelty nothing less than diabolic".

While the great statesmen and others in high places approved of this blockade, the poor British Tommy, who had done the fighting, could not stand the sight of it. After the armistice a British army had been stationed at Cologne in the Rhineland, and the English general

commanding this army had to send a telegram to Prime Minister Lloyd George pointing out "how bad was the effect produced upon the British army by the spectacle of the sufferings of German women and children". For more than seven months after the armistice England continued this blockade of Germany.

The long years of war had brutalised the warring nations. They destroyed the moral sense of large numbers of people, and made many normal persons into half criminals. People got used to violence and to deliberate distortion of facts, and were filled with hatred and the spirit of revenge.

What was the balance-sheet of the war? No one knows yet; they are still making it up! I shall give you some figures to impress on you what modern war means.

The total casualties of the war have been calculated as follows:—

Known dead soldiers	..	..	10,000,000
Presumed dead soldiers	..	..	3,000,000
Dead civilians	..	..	13,000,000
Wounded	..	..	20,000,000
Prisoners	..	..	3,000,000
War orphans	..	..	9,000,000
War widows	..	..	5,000,000
Refugees	..	..	10,000,000

Look at these tremendous figures and try to imagine the human suffering that underlies them. Add them up: the total of dead and wounded alone comes to forty-six millions, which is nearly the total population of the United Provinces!

And the cost in hard cash? They are still counting it! An American estimate gives the total expenditure on the Allied side as £40,999,600,000—nearly forty-one billion pounds; and on the German side as £15,122,300,000—over fifteen billion pounds. Grand total, over fifty-six billion pounds! These figures cannot be fully understood by us as they are so utterly out of proportion with our daily life. They seem to remind us of astronomical figures like the distance to the sun

or the stars. It is not surprising that the old warring nations, victors and vanquished alike, are hopelessly involved still in the after effects of war finance.

The 'war to end war', and 'make the world safe for democracy', and 'ensure the freedom of small nationalities', and for 'self-determination', and generally for freedom and high ideals, was over; and England, France, America, Italy and their smaller satellites (Russia was of course out of it) had triumphed. How these high and noble ideals were translated into practice we shall see later. Meanwhile, we might repeat the lines which the English poet Southey wrote about another and an older victory.

"And everybody praised the Duke
Who this great fight did win."

"But what good came of it at last?"
Quoth little Peterkin.

"Why; that I cannot tell," said he,
"But 'twas a famous victory."

THE PASSING AWAY OF TSARDOM IN RUSSIA

April 7, 1933

In my account of the course of the war I referred to the Russian Revolution and to its effect on the war. Apart from its effect on the war, the Revolution was in itself a tremendous event, unique of its kind in world history. Although it was the first revolution of its kind, it may not long remain the only one of its type, for it has become a challenge to other countries and an example for many revolutionaries all over the world. It is therefore deserving of close study. It was undoubtedly the biggest outcome of the war; and yet, it was the most unthought of, and the least desired, by any of the governments and statesmen that plunged into the war. Or, perhaps, it would be more correct to say that it was the child of the historical and economic conditions prevailing in Russia, which were rapidly brought to a head by the vast losses and suffering caused by the war, and of which a master mind and a genius in revolution, Lenin, took advantage.

There were really two revolutions in the year 1917 in Russia, one in March, the other in November. Or the whole period may be looked upon as one continuous process of revolution with two high water marks.

I have told you in my last letter on Russia about the 1905 revolution which also arose at a time of war and defeat. This was suppressed with brutality, and the Tsar's government continued its career of unchecked autocracy, spying out and crushing all liberal opinion. The Marxists, and especially the Bolsheviks, were crushed and all their principal men and women were either in

the penal colonies of Siberia or in exile abroad. But even the handful of these people abroad carried on their propaganda and study under the leadership of Lenin. They were all convinced Marxists, but the doctrine of Marx had been worked out for a highly industrialised country like England or Germany. Russia was still medieval and agricultural with just a fringe of industry in the large towns. Lenin set about adapting the fundamentals of Marxism to Russia as it was. He wrote a great deal on this subject, and there were many arguments among the Russian exiles, and so they prepared themselves in the theory of revolution. Lenin believed in a job being done by experts and trained people, not merely by enthusiasts. If a revolution was to be attempted, it was his opinion that people should be thoroughly trained for this job also, so that when the time for action came, they should be clear in their minds as to what they should do. So Lenin and his colleagues utilised the dark years of repression after 1905 in training themselves for future action.

Already in 1914 the urban working class in Russia was waking up and becoming revolutionary again. There were numerous political strikes. Then came the war and this absorbed all attention, and the most advanced workers were sent to the front as soldiers. Lenin and his group (most of the leaders were in exile outside Russia) opposed the war from the very beginning. They were not carried away by it like most of the socialists of other countries. They called it a capitalists' war with which the working class had no concern except in so far as they could profit by it to win their own freedom.

The Russian army in the field met with terrible losses, probably the greatest of all the armies involved. The Russian generals were, even for military men, who are not usually supposed to be endowed with much intelligence, remarkably incompetent. Russian soldiers, ill equipped with arms and often with no ammunition and no supports, were hurled at the enemy and sent to certain

death by the hundred thousand. Meanwhile in Petrograd—as St. Petersburg came to be known now—and other big cities, there was tremendous profiteering and huge fortunes were made by speculators. These “patriotic” speculators and profiteers were of course loud in their demand for a war to the finish. It would no doubt have suited them to have a perpetual war! But the soldiers and workers and the peasantry (which supplied the soldiers) became exhausted and hungry and full of discontent.

The Tsar Nicholas was a very foolish person, a great deal under the influence of his wife the Tsarina, an equally foolish, but a stronger person. The two surrounded themselves with knaves and fools, and nobody dared to criticise them. Matters came to such a pass that a disgusting scoundrel, known as Gregory Rasputin, became the chief favourite of the Tsarina, and through her, of the Tsar. Rasputin (the word *Rasputin* means ‘dirty dog’) had been a poor peasant who had got into trouble over stealing horses. He decided to put on a garb of holiness and adopt the paying profession of an ascetic. As in India, this was an easy way of making money in Russia. He grew his hair long, and with his hair his fame also grew till it reached the imperial court. The son of the Tsar and Tsarina, called the Tsarevitch, was a bit of an invalid, and Rasputin somehow made the Tsarina believe that he would cure the boy. His fortune was made and soon he dominated the Tsar and Tsarina, and the highest appointments were made at his instance. He lived a most depraved life and took huge bribes but still for years he played this dominating part.

Everybody was disgusted by this. Even the moderates and the aristocracy began to murmur, and there was talk of a palace revolution, that is, a forcible change of Tsars. Meanwhile Tsar Nicholas had made himself the commander-in-chief of his army and was making a mess of everything. A few days before the end of the year 1916 Rasputin was murdered by a member of the Tsar’s family. He was invited to dinner and

asked to shoot himself; on his refusal to do so, he was shot down. Rasputin's murder was welcomed generally as a good riddance, but it resulted in greater oppression by the Tsar's secret police.

The crisis grew. There was a food famine and riots for food in Petrograd. And then, in the early days of March, out of the long agony of the workers, unexpectedly and spontaneously, grew the revolution. Five days in March, from the 8th to the 12th, saw the triumph of this revolution. It was no palace affair; it was not even an organised revolution, carefully planned by its leaders on the top. It seemed to rise from below, from the most oppressed of the workers, and went groping blindly forward with no apparent plan or leadership. The various revolutionary parties, including the local Bolsheviks, were taken unawares and did not know what lead to give. The masses themselves took the initiative, and the moment they had won the soldiers stationed at Petrograd to their side, success had come to them. These revolutionary masses must not, however, be mistaken for unorganised mobs bent on destruction, as the peasant outbreaks had often been in the past. The important fact about this March revolution was that the lead was taken in it, for the first time in history, by the class of factory workers, the proletariat, as it has been called. And these workers, although they had no outstanding leaders at the time with them (Lenin and others being in prison or exile), had many an unknown worker who had been trained by Lenin's group. These unknown workers in dozens of factories gave backbone to the whole movement and directed it into definite channels.

We see here, as nowhere else, the role of the industrial masses in action. Russia of course, was overwhelmingly an agricultural country, and even this agriculture was carried on in a medieval way. In the country as a whole there was little of modern industry; such of it as existed was concentrated in a few towns. Petrograd had many of these factories and had thus a

huge population of industrial workers. The March revolution was the work of these Petrograd workers and of the regiments stationed in that city.

March 8, heard the first rumblings of the revolution. The women took the lead, and the women workers of the textile factories marched out and demonstrated in the streets. The next day the strikes spread; many men workers also came out; there are demands for bread and shouts of "Down with autocracy". The authorities send the Cossacks, who had always in the past been the main support of Tsardom, to crush the demonstrating workers. The Cossack push the people about but do not shoot, and the workers notice with joy that the Cossacks are really friendly behind their official masks. Immediately the enthusiasm of the people grows and they try to fraternise with the Cossacks. But the police are hated and stoned. The third day, March 10, saw this spirit of fraternisation with the Cossacks grow. A rumour even spreads that the Cossacks had fired at the police who had been shooting at the people. The police retire from the streets. Women workers go up to the soldiers and make fervent appeals to them; the soldiers bayonets go up.

The next day, March 11, is a Sunday. The workers gather in the centre of the city, the police shooting at them from hidden places. Some soldiers also shoot at the people, who thereupon go to the barracks of this regiment and complain bitterly. The regiment is moved and it comes out under its non-commissioned officers to protect the people; it fires on the police. The regiment is arrested, but too late. The revolt spreads to other regiments on March 12 and they come out with their rifles and machine guns. There is a great deal of shooting in the streets but it was difficult to say who was shooting whom. The soldiers and workers then go and arrest some of the ministers (others had fled), and police men, and secret service men. They liberate the old political prisoners in the jails.

The revolution had triumphed in Petrograd.

Moscow followed soon after. The villages watched developments. Slowly the peasantry accepted the new order, but without enthusiasm. For them there were only two questions that mattered to possess land and to have peace.

What of the Tsar? What was happening to him during these eventful days? He was not in Petrograd; he was far away in a small town from where, as Commander-in-Chief, he was supposed to be directing his armies. But his day was over, and, like an over-ripe fruit, he simply fell off almost unnoticed. The mighty Tsar, the great autocrat of all the Russias before whom millions trembled, the *Little Father* of 'Holy Russia', disappeared into the 'dustbin of history'. It is strange how great systems collapse when they have fulfilled their destiny and lived their day. When the Tsar heard of the workers' strikes and disturbances in Petrograd, he ordered a declaration of martial law. This was formally declared by the general in command, but the declaration was not broadcasted in the city or pasted up as there was no one to do this job! The government machinery had gone to pieces. The Tsar, still blind to what was happening, tried to return to Petrograd. The railway workers stopped his train on the way. The Tsarina, who was then in a suburb of Petrograd, sent a telegram to the Tsar. It was returned from the telegraph office with a note in pencil: "Whereabouts of addressee unknown!"

The generals at the front and the liberal leaders in Petrograd, frightened by these developments, and hoping to save something from the wreck, begged the Tsar to abdicate. He did so, nominating a relative to take his place. But there were to be no more Tsars; the house of Romanoff, after three hundred years of autocratic rule, had left the Russian stage for good.

The aristocracy, the landowning classes, the upper middle classes, and even the liberals and reformers, looked upon the eruption of the working class with terror and dismay. They felt powerless before them

when they saw that the army on which they relied had joined the workers. They were yet not sure on which side victory would lie, for it was possible that the Tsar might turn up with an army from the front and, with its help, crush the insurrection. So, fear of the workers on the one side and the Tsar on the other, and an excessive anxiety to save their own skins, made their lot a miserable one. There was the Duma which represented the landowning classes and the upper bourgeoisie. Even the workers looked up to it to some extent, but instead of taking the lead in the crisis or doing anything, its president and members sat in fear and trembling and could not make up their minds what to do.

Meanwhile the Soviet took shape. To the workers' representatives were added soldiers' representatives also, and the new Soviet took possession of one wing of the huge Tauride Palace, part of which was occupied by the Duma. The workers and soldiers were full of enthusiasm at their victory. But then the question arose: what they were to do with it? They had won power; who was to exercise it? It did not strike them that the Soviet itself might do so; they took it for granted that the bourgeoisie should take power. So a deputation from the Soviet tramped up to the Duma to ask them to start governing. The president and members of the Duma thought that this deputation had come to arrest them! They had no wish to be burdened with power; they were afraid of the risks involved. But what were they to do? The Soviet deputation insisted and they were afraid of refusing them. So most reluctantly, and in fear of the consequences, a committee of the Duma accepted power, and to the outside world it appeared that the Duma was leading the revolution! What an extraordinary mix-up it was; we would hardly believe such things could happen if we read about them in a story. But fact is often stranger than fiction.

The Provisional Government that the committee of

the Duma appointed was a very conservative body and its prime minister was a prince. In another wing of the same building sat the Soviet continually interfering with the work of the Provisional Government. But the Soviet itself was moderate to begin with and the Bolsheviks in it were a mere handful. Thus there was a kind of double government—the Provisional Government and the Soviet—and behind both were the revolutionary masses which had carried through the revolution, and which were expecting great things from it. The only lead the hungry and war-weary masses got from the new government was that they must carry on the war till the Germans were beaten. Was it for this, they wondered, that they had gone through the revolution and driven away the Tsar?

Just then, on April 17, Lenin arrived on the scene. He had been in Switzerland right through the war, and he was eager to come to Russia as soon as he heard of the revolution. How was he to do so? The English and French would not allow him to pass their territories, nor would the Germans and Austrians. At length, for reasons of their own, the German government agreed to let him pass in a sealed train from the Swiss to the Russian frontier. They hoped of course, and with reason, that the arrival of Lenin in Russia would weaken the Provisional Government and the war party, for Lenin was against the war, and they hoped to profit by this. They did not imagine that this more or less obscure revolutionary would end by shaking Europe and the world.

There was no doubt or vagueness in Lenin's mind. His were the penetrating eyes which detected the moods of the masses; the clear head which could apply and adapt well thought out principles to changing situations; the inflexible will which held on to the course he had mapped out, regardless of immediate consequences. The very day he arrived he shook up violently the Bolshevik party, criticised their inaction, and pointed out in burning phrases what their duty was. His speech was

an electric charge which pained but at the same vivified. "We are not charlatans", he said, "we must base ourselves only on the consciousness of the masses. Even if it is necessary to remain in a minority—so be it. It is a good thing to give up for a time the position of leadership; we must not be afraid to remain in the minority". And so he stuck to his principles and refused to compromise. The revolution, which had drifted for so long leaderless and without guides, had at last got its leader. The hour had produced the man.

What were these differences in theory which separated the Bolsheviks from the Mensheviks and other revolutionary groups at this stage? And what had paralysed the local Bolsheviks before Lenin's arrival? And again, why had the soviet, after having the power in its hands, made it over to the old-fashioned and conservative Duma? I cannot go into these questions deeply, but we must give them some thought if we are to understand the continually changing drama of Petrograd and Russia in 1917.

Karl Marx's theory of human change and progress, called the 'materialist conception of history', was based on new social forms taking the place of old forms as these latter became out of date. As the methods of technical production improved, the economic and political organization of society gradually caught up to them. The way this took place was by continual class struggles between the dominant class and the exploited classes. Thus the old feudal class had given place in Western Europe to the bourgeoisie which now controlled the economic and political structure in England, France, Germany, etc., and which, in its turn, would give place to the working class. In Russia the feudal class was still in command and the change which had put the bourgeoisie in power in Western Europe had not yet taken place. Most Marxists, therefore, thought that, inevitably, Russia would have to pass through this bourgeois and parliamentary stage before it could proceed to the last stage of the workers' republic. The middle stage

could not be jumped over, according to them. Lenin himself, prior to the March, 1917, revolution, had laid down an intermediate policy of co-operating with the peasants (and not opposing the bourgeoisie) against the Tsar and the landowners, for a bourgeois revolution.

The Bolsheviks and Mensheviks and all believers in Marx's theories were therefore full of this idea of having a bourgeois democratic republic after the English or French pattern. The leading workers' representatives also thought this inevitable, and it was because of this that the Soviet, instead of keeping power in its own hands went and offered it to the Duma. These people, as is so often the case with all of us, had become the slaves of their own doctrines and could not see that a new situation had arisen, which demanded a different policy or at least a different adaptation of the old policy. The masses were far more revolutionary than the leaders. The Mensheviks, who controlled the Soviet, even went so far as to say that the working class should not raise any social question then; their immediate task was to achieve political freedom. The Bolsheviks temporised. The March revolution succeeded in spite of its hesitating and cautious leaders.

With Lenin's arrival all this was changed. He sensed the position immediately and, with the genius of true leadership, adapted the Marxian programme accordingly. The fight was to be against capitalism itself now for the rule of the working class in co-operation with the poorer peasantry. The three immediate slogans of the Bolsheviks became (1) democratic republic, (2) confiscation of the landed estates and (3) an eight hour day for the workers. Immediately these slogans brought reality in the struggle for the peasantry and workers. It was not a vague and empty ideal for them; it meant life and hope.

Lenin's policy was for the Bolsheviks to win over the majority of the workers to their side and thus to capture the Soviet; and for the Soviet then to seize power from the Provisional Government. He was not

for another revolution immediately. He insisted on winning a majority of the workers and the Soviet before the time come to overthrow the Provisional Government. He was hard on those who wished to co-operate with this government; that was betraying the revolution. He was equally hard on those who wanted to rush ahead to upset this government before the time for it had come; "a moment of action" he said, "is no time to aim 'a wee bit too far to the left'. We look upon that as the greatest crime, disorganisation".

So, calmly but inexorably, like some agent of an inevitable fate, this lump of ice covering a blazing fire within, went ahead to his appointed goal.

THE BOLSHEVIKS SEIZE POWER

April 9, 1933

During a revolutionary period history seems to march with seven-league boots. There are rapid changes outwardly, but an even greater change takes place in the consciousness of the masses. They learn little from books as they have not much opportunity of a bookish education; and books, often enough, hide more than they reveal. Their school is the harder but truer one of experience. During the life and death struggle for power in a period of revolution the masks that usually hide people's real motives came off, and the reality on which society is based can be seen behind them. So during this fateful year 1917 in Russia, the masses, and especially the industrial workers in the towns, who were at the heart of the revolution, learnt their lessons from events, and changed almost from day to day.

There was no stability or equilibrium anywhere. Life was dynamic and changing, and people and classes were pulling and pushing different ways. There were still people hoping and conspiring for the return of Tsardom, but they did not represent an important class and we can ignore them. The main conflict developed between the Provisional Government and the Soviet; and yet the majority in the Soviet were for co-operation and compromise with the government. These compromisers were afraid of being put in charge of the government and the State power. "Who will take the place of the government? We? But our hands tremble," said a speaker in the Soviet. It is a familiar cry which we have heard in India also from many a possessors of

palsied hands and a terrified heart. But strong hands and stout hearts are not lacking when the time comes for them.

The conflict between the Provisional Government and the Soviet was inevitable however much the compromisers on either side tried to avoid it. The Provisional Government wanted to please the Allies by carrying on the war, and the possessing classes in Russia by protecting as far as possible their properties. The Soviet, being more in touch with the masses, sensed their demand for peace and land for the peasants, and many demands from the workers, such as the eight hour day. Thus it happened that the government was paralysed by the Soviet, and the Soviet itself was paralysed by the masses for the masses were far more revolutionary than the parties and their leaders.

An effort was made to bring the government more in line with the Soviet, and a radical lawyer and an eloquent orator, Kerensky, became the leading member of the government. He succeeded in forming a coalition government to which the Menshevik majority in the Soviet sent some representatives. He also tried hard to please England and France by launching an offensive against Germany. The offensive failed as the army and the people were in no mood for more war.

Meanwhile, All-Russian Soviet Congresses were being held in Petrograd and each subsequent Congress was more extreme than the last. More and more Bolshevik members were elected to them and the two dominant parties, the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries (an agrarian party), had their majority lessened. The Bolshevik influence increased especially with the Petrograd workers. All over the country Soviets had sprung up and they would not obey the orders of the government unless they were countersigned by the Soviet. One of the reasons why the Provisional Government was weak was the absence of a strong middle class in Russia.

While a tussle for power was going on in the capital,

the peasantry took the law in their own hands. As I have told you, these peasants were not very enthusiastic about the March Revolution, nor were they against it. They waited and watched. But the landlords of the large estates, fearing that their property would be confiscated, divided it up into small holdings and gave it to dummy owners who would keep in their behalf. They also transferred much of their property to foreigners. In this way they tried to save their lands. The peasantry did not like this at all and they asked the government to stop all land sales by a decree. The government hesitated; what could it do? It did not want to irritate either party. Then the peasants began to take action themselves. As early as April some of them arrested their landlords and seized and divided the estates. The soldiers back from the front (who were of course peasants) played the leading part in this. The movement developed till the lands were seized on a mass scale. By June even the Siberian steppes had been affected. In Siberia there were no big landlords so the peasantry took possession of church and monastery lands.

It is interesting to note that this confiscation of the big estates took place entirely on the initiative of the peasants and many months before the Bolshevik revolution. Lenin was in favour of the immediate transfer of the land to the peasants in an organised way. He was wholly against haphazard anarchist seizures. Thus when the Bolsheviks came to power later on they found a Russia of peasant proprietors.

Exactly a month after Lenin's arrival another prominent exile came back to Petrograd. This was Trotsky who had returned from New York after being detained on the way by the British. Trotsky was not one of the old Bolsheviks, nor was he now a Menshevik. But soon he lined up on the side of Lenin, and he took his place as the leading figure of the Petrograd Soviet. He was a great orator, a fine writer and very much of an electric battery, full of energy, and he was of the

greatest help to Lenin's party. I must give you rather a long extract from his autobiography—*My life* the book is called—in which he describes the meetings he addressed in a building called the Modern Circus. This is not only a fine piece of writing, but it also brings a vivid and pulsating picture before our eyes of those strange revolutionary days of 1917 in Petrograd.

"The air, intense with breathing and waiting, fairly exploded with shouts and with the passionate yells peculiar to the Modern Circus. Above and around me was press of elbows, chests and heads. I spoke from out of a warm cavern of human bodies; whenever I stretched out my hands I would touch some one, and a grateful movement in response would give me to understand that I was not to worry about it, not to break off my speech but to keep on. No speaker, no matter how exhausted, could resist the electric tension of that impassioned human throng. They wanted to know, to understand, to find their way. At times it seemed as if I felt, with my lips, the stern inquisitiveness of this crowd that had become merged into a single whole. Then all arguments and words thought out in advance would break and recede under the imperative pressure of sympathy, and other words, other arguments, utterly unexpected by the orator but needed by these people, would emerge in full array from my sub-consciousness. On such occasions I felt as if I was listening to the speaker from the outside, trying to keep pace with his ideas, afraid that, like a somnambulist, he might fall off the edge of the roof at the sound of my conscious reasoning."

"Such was the Modern Circus. It had its own contours, fiery, tender and frenzied. The infants were peacefully sucking the breasts from which approving or threatening shouts were coming. The whole crowd was like that, like infants clinging with their dry lips to the nipples of the revolution. But this infant matured quickly."

So the ever changing drama of revolution went on in Petrograd and in other cities and villages of Russia. The infant matured and grew big. Everywhere, as a result of the terrible strain of the war, economic collapse was becoming evident. And yet, profiteers went on making their war profits!

The Bolshevik strength and influence went on increasing in the factories and soviets. Alarmed by

this, Kerensky decided to suppress them. At first there was a great campaign of slander against Lenin who was described as a German agent sent to bring trouble to Russia. Had he not come across Germany from Switzerland with the connivance of the German authorities? Lenin became terribly unpopular with the middle classes who considered him a traitor. Kerensky issued a warrant for Lenin's arrest, not as a revolutionary but as a pro-German traitor. Lenin himself was keen on facing a trial to disprove this charge; his colleagues would not agree to this and forced him to go into hiding. Trotsky was also arrested, but later released on the insistence of the Petrograd Soviet. Many other Bolsheviks were arrested; their newspapers were suppressed; workers, who were supposed to favour them, were disarmed. The attitude of these workers had been growing more and more aggressive and threatening to the Provisional Government, and huge demonstrations had been held repeatedly against it.

There was an interlude when counter-revolution raised its head. An old general, Kornilov, advanced on the capital with an army to crush the whole revolution, including the Provisional Government. As he drew near to the city his army melted away. They had gone over to the side of the revolution.

Events were marching rapidly. The Soviet was becoming a definite rival to the Government and often cancelled the government's orders or issued contrary directions. The Smolny Institute was now the seat of the Soviet and the head-quarters of the revolution in Petrograd. This place had been a private school for the girls of the nobility.

Lenin came to the outskirts of Petrograd and the Bolsheviks decided that the time had come to seize power from the Provisional Government. Trotsky was put in charge of all the arrangements for the insurrection, and everything was carefully mapped, what vital points to seize and when. November 7, was fixed for the rising. On that day there was going to be a session of

the All-Russian Congress of Soviets. Lenin fixed this date and his reason for it is interesting. "November the 6th, will be too early," he is reported to have said. "We must have an All-Russian basis for a rising, and on the 6th all the delegates to the Congress will not have arrived. On the other hand November 8th, will be too late. By that time the Congress will be organised, and it is difficult for a large body of people to take swift, decisive action. We must act on the 7th, the day the Congress meets, so that we may say to it, 'Here is the power! What are you going to do with it?'" Thus spoke the clear-headed expert in revolution, knowing full well that the success of revolutions often depends on apparently trivial happenings.*

November 7th came, and Soviet soldiers went and occupied government buildings, especially the vital and strategic places like the telegraph office, telephone exchange, and the State Bank. There was no opposition. "The Provisional Government simply melted away", said the official report sent to England by a British agent.

Lenin became the head of the new government, the president, and Trotsky, the foreign minister. The next day, November 8, Lenin came to the Soviet Congress at the Smolny Institute. It was evening. The Congress welcomed the leader with a mighty cheer. An American journalist, Reed, who was present on this occasion, has described what the "great Lenin" looked like when he marched to the platform.

"A short stocky figure with a big head set down on his shoulders, bold and bulging. Little eyes, a snubbish nose, wide generous mouth and heavy chin; clean shaven now,

*This story about November 7, being fixed by Lenin for the Bolshevik seizure of power has been given by Reed, the American journalist, who was present in Petrograd then. But other people who were present do not accept it. Lenin was in hiding and he was afraid that the other Bolshevik leaders might temporise and allow the right moment to pass. So he was continually urging them to action. Matters coming to a head on the 7th, this action took place then.

but already beginning to bristle with the well-known beard of his past and future. Dressed in shabby clothes, his trousers much too long for him. Unimpressive to be the idol of the mob. A strange popular leader—a leader purely by virtue of intellect; colourless, humourless, uncompromising and detached, without picturesque idiosyncrasies—but with the power of explaining profound ideas in simple terms, of analysing a concrete situation. And combining with shrewdness the greatest intellectual audacity.”

The second revolution within the year had succeeded and it had been a remarkably peaceful one so far. The transfer of power took place with very little shedding of blood. There had been much more fighting and killing in March. The March Revolution had been a spontaneous unorganised one, the November one had been carefully planned out. For the first time in history the representatives of the poorest classes, and especially of the industrial workers, were at the head of a country. But they were not going to have such an easy success. Tempests were gathering all round them to burst on them with uncontrolled fury.

What was the situation that faced Lenin and his new Bolshevik government? The German war was still on although the Russian army had gone to pieces and there was no chance of its fighting; there was disorder all over the country and roving bands of soldiers and brigands did much as they liked; the economic structure had broken down; food was scarce and people were hungry; all round him were representatives of the old order ready to crush the revolution; the organisation of the State was capitalist and most of the old government servants refused to co-operate with the new government; bankers would not give money; even the telegraph people would not send telegrams. A difficult enough situation to frighten the bravest.

Lenin and his colleagues put their shoulders to the wheel. Peace with Germany was their first anxiety and immediately they arranged for an armistice. The delegates of the two countries met at Brest Litovsk. The Germans knew well enough that there was no fight left

in the Bolsheviks and, in their pride and folly, they made tremendous and humiliating demands. Much as the Bolsheviks desired peace, they were taken aback by this and many of them were for a rejection of the terms. Lenin stood out for peace at any cost. There is a story that Trotsky, who was one of the Russian delegates at the peace conference, was asked by the Germans to go to a function in evening dress. He was perturbed; was it proper for a workers' delegate to put on this kind of bourgeois clothing? He telegraphed to Lenin for advice, and Lenin immediately replied: "If it will help to bring peace, go in a petticoat!"

While the Soviet argued about the peace terms, the Germans started advancing on Petrograd, and they made their peace offer stiffer than before. Lenin's advice was accepted in the end by the Soviet and they signed the peace of Brest Litovsk in March, 1918, much as they hated it. By this peace a huge slice of Russian territory on the west was annexed by Germany, but peace at any cost had to be accepted as, according to Lenin, "the army had voted for peace with its legs."

The Soviet had tried at first to bring about a general peace among all the powers involved in the world war. On the very next day after their seizure of power, they had issued a decree offering peace to the world, and they made it quite clear that they renounced all claims under the Tsarist secret treaties. Constantinople, they said, must remain with the Turks, and let there be no other annexations. The Soviet's suggestion went unanswered, as both the warring parties still had hopes of success and were keen on taking the spoils of war. Partly the object of the Soviet in making the offer was no doubt propaganda. They wanted to influence the masses in each country and the war-weary soldiery, and to provoke social revolutions in other countries. For they were after world revolution; only thus, they thought, could they protect their own revolution. I have already told you that Soviet propaganda had great effect on the French and German armies.

Lenin looked upon the Brest Litovsk peace with Germany as a temporary affair which would not last long. As it happened, it was annulled by the Soviet nine months later, as soon as Germany was defeated on the western front by the Allies. What Lenin wanted was to give a little rest, a breathing-space, to the weary workers and peasants in the army so that they might go back home and see with their eyes what the Revolution had done. He wanted the peasant to realise that the landlords had gone and the land belonged to them, and the industrial workers to feel that their exploiters had also gone. This would make them appreciate the gains of the Revolution and eager to defend them, and they would realise who their real enemies were. So Lenin thought, knowing full well that Civil War was coming. His policy was triumphantly justified later. These peasants and workers went back from the front to their fields and factories; they were no Bolsheviks or socialists but they became the staunchest supporters of the Revolution because they did not want to give up what they had got by it.

While they were trying to settle with the Germans somehow, the Bolshevik leaders also turned their attention to internal conditions. Large numbers of ex-army officers and adventurers with machine guns and war material were carrying on a brigand's trade, shooting and plundering in the heart of the big cities. There were also some members of the old Anarchist parties who disapproved of the Soviets and gave a lot of trouble. The Soviet authorities came down with a heavy hand on all these gangsters and other and crushed them.

A greater danger to the Soviet régime came from the members of the various civil services, many of whom refused to work under the Bolsheviks or co-operate with them in any way. Lenin laid down the principle that 'he that will not work, neither shall he eat'; no work, no food. All civil servants who did not co-operate were immediately dismissed. The bankers refused to open their safes; they were opened by dynamite. But the

supreme example of Lenin's contempt for the servants of the old order who refused to co-operate was seen when the Commander-in-Chief refused to obey orders. He was dismissed and within five minutes a young Bolshevik lieutenant, Krylenko, was made the Commander-in-Chief!

In spite of these changes much of the old structure of Russia remained. It is no easy matter to socialise a huge country suddenly, and it is possible that the process of change in Russia might have taken many long years if matters had not been forced by events. Just as the peasants had driven out the landlords, the workers in many instances, angry with their old bosses, drove them out and took possession of the factories. The Soviet could not possibly give back the factories to the old capitalistic owners, and so it took possession of them. In some cases these owners, during the Civil War that followed, tried to damage the plants of the factories, and again the Soviet government intervened and took possession of these factories to protect them. In this way the socialization of the means of production, that is a kind of state socialism, or state ownership of the factories, etc., went on much more rapidly than it might have done under normal conditions.

Life was not very different in Russia during the first nine months of Soviet rule. The Bolsheviks tolerated criticism and even abuse, and anti-Bolshevik papers continued to appear. The population generally was starving, but the rich still had plenty of money for ostentation and luxury. The night cabarets were crowded and racing and other sports went on. The richer bourgeoisie was very much in evidence in the great towns, openly rejoicing at the expected downfall of the Soviet government. These people, who were so patriotically keen on carrying on the war against Germany now actually celebrated the advance of the Germans on Petrograd. They were quite cheerful at the prospect of German armies occupying their capital city. The dislike of social revolution was far greater

for them than the fear of alien domination. This is almost always so, especially when classes are concerned. We see it to-day in India. Many people here prefer foreign domination to the risk of losing their present special privileges and vested interests.

Life was thus more or less normal and there was certainly no Bolshevik terror at this stage. The famous Moscow ballet continued from day to day before crowded houses. The Soviet government had moved to Moscow when Petrograd was threatened by the Germans, and Moscow has been their capital ever since. The ambassadors of the Allies were still in Russia. They had run away from Petrograd, when there was danger of the city falling into German hands, and established themselves in safety in Vologda a small country town far from all activities. There they sat together in a continuous state of perturbation and excitement at the wild-rumours that reached them. They would make anxious and frequent inquiries from Trotsky if the rumours were true. Trotsky grew rather tired of this nervous agitation of these old diplomats and he offered to write "a bromide prescription to calm the nerves of their Excellencies of Vologda!" Doctors give bromide to soothe the nerves of hysterical and excitable people.

Life seemed to go on normally on the surface, but below this apparent calm were many currents and cross-currents. No one expected the Bolsheviks, not even they themselves, to survive for long. Every one was intriguing. The Germans had set up a puppet state in the Ukraine in South Russia and in spite of the peace, always seemed to threaten the Soviet. The Allies of course hated the Germans, but they hated the Bolsheviks even more. President Wilson of America had indeed sent a cordial greeting to the Soviet Congress early in 1918; he seems to have repented and changed his mind later. So the Allies privately subsidised and helped counter-revolutionary activities and even took a secret share in them. Moscow buzzed with foreign spies. The chief man of the British secret service, known as

the master spy of Britain, was sent there to create trouble for the Soviet government. The dispossessed aristocrats and bourgeoisie were continually fomenting counter-revolution with the help of money from the Allies.

So matters stood about the middle of the year 1918. The life of the Soviet seemed to hang by a slender thread.

THE SOVIETS WIN THROUGH

April 11, 1933

The month of July, 1918, saw startling developments in the situation in Russia. The net round the Bolsheviks was gradually closing in upon them. The Germans threatened from the Ukraine in the South, and a large number of old Czechoslovakian prisoners of war in Russia were encouraged by the Allies to march on Moscow. All over the western front in France the Great War was still going on, but in Soviet Russia the strange spectacle was seen of both the Allies and the German powers working independently in a common enterprise—the crushing of the Bolsheviks. Again we see how much greater is the force of class hatred than that of national hatred, and national hatred is poisonous and bitter enough. War was not officially declared against Russia by these Powers; they found many other ways of harassing the Soviet, notably by encouraging the counter-revolutionary leaders and helping them with arms and money. Several old Tsarist generals now took the field against the Soviet.

The Tsar and his family were being kept as prisoners in East Russia near the Ural mountains in the charge of the local Soviet there. The advance of the Czech troops in this region frightened this local Soviet, and they were alarmed at the possibility of the ex-Tsar being rescued and becoming a great centre of counter-revolution. So they took the law into their own hands and executed the whole family. It appears that the central committee of the Soviet was not responsible for this, and Lenin was opposed to the execution of the ex-Tsar on grounds of international policy and of his family on

humanitarian grounds. The deed having been done, however, the central government justified it. Probably this upset the Allied governments all the more and made them still more aggressive.

August saw a worsening of the situation, and two events brought anger, despair and terror in their train. One of these was an attempt on Lenin's life, and the other was the landing of an Allied force at Archangel in North Russia. There was wild excitement in Moscow and the end of the Soviet's existence seemed to be very near. Moscow itself was practically surrounded by enemies—Germans, Czechs, and the counter-revolutionary forces. Only a few districts round Moscow were under Soviet rule and the landing of an Allied army seemed to make the end certain. The Bolsheviks did not have much of an army; it was barely five months to the Brest Litovsk peace and most of the old army had melted away to the fields. Moscow itself was full of conspiracies, and the bourgeoisie was openly rejoicing at the approaching fall of the Soviets.

Such was the terrible plight of the nine-month old Soviet Republic. Despair seized the Bolsheviks and fear, and as they were going to die anyhow, they decided to die fighting. As the young French Republic had done a century and a quarter earlier, like a wild animal at bay, they turned on their enemies. There was to be no more tolerance, no mercy. The whole country was put under martial law and early in September the Central Soviet Committee announced the Red Terror. "Death to all traitors", "merciless war on the foreign invaders". They would fight with their backs to the wall both the enemy within and the enemy without. It was the Soviet against the world and against its own reactionaries. A period of what is called 'military communism' also began, and the whole country was turned into a kind of besieged camp. Every effort was made to build up the Red Army and Trotsky was put in charge of this.

This was about the time, September and October,

1918, when the German war machine in the west was cracking up and there was talk of an armistice. President Wilson had laid down his Fourteen Points which were supposed to embody the aims of the Allies. One of these points, it is interesting to remember, was that all Russian territory was to be evacuated and Russia was to be given full opportunity for self-development with the aid of the Powers. A singular commentary on this was being provided by the Allied intervention in Russia and their landing of forces there. The Bolshevik government sent a note to President Wilson pungently criticising his Fourteen Points. In the course of this note they said: "You demand the independence of Poland, Serbia, Belgium, and freedom for the people of Austro-Hungary. But strangely we do not notice in your demands any mention of freedom for Ireland, Egypt, India, or even the Philippine Islands."

Peace came between the Allies and the German Powers on November 11, 1918, when the armistice was signed. But in Russia Civil War raged for the whole of 1919 and 1920. Single-handed, the Soviets fought a host of enemies. At one time the Red Army was attacked on seventeen different fronts. England, America, France, Japan, Italy, Serbia, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, the Baltic States, Poland, and a host of counter-revolutionary Russian generals, were all opposing the Soviet, and the fighting extended from eastern Siberia to the Baltic and the Crimea. Repeatedly, the end of the Soviet seemed near, Moscow itself was threatened, Petrograd was on the point of falling to the enemy, but it surmounted every crisis, and with each success grew its self-confidence and strength.

One of the counter-revolutionary leaders was Admiral Kolchak. He described himself as the ruler of Russia, and the Allies actually recognised him as such and helped him greatly. The way he behaved in Siberia is shown by an ally of his, General Graves, who commanded the United States army supporting Kolchak. This American general says:

"There were horrible murders committed, but they were not committed by the Bolsheviks, as the world believes. I am well on the side of safety when I say that the anti-Bolsheviks killed one hundred people in Eastern Siberia to every one killed by the Bolsheviks."

It will interest you to know on what knowledge eminent statesmen conduct the affairs of great nations and make war and peace. Lloyd George, who was the British Prime Minister at the time, and perhaps the most powerful man in Europe, speaking about Russia in the British House of Commons referred to Kolchak and other generals there. In the same breath he referred to "General Kharkov". Kharkov, instead of being a general, happens to be an important city, the capital of Ukraine! This ignorance of elementary geography however, did not prevent these statesmen from cutting up Europe into bits and making a new map of it.

The Allies also blockaded Russia and so effective was this that for the whole of 1919 Russia could neither buy nor sell anything abroad.

In spite of all these stupendous difficulties and numerous and powerful enemies Soviet Russia survived and triumphed. This was one of the most astonishing feats in history. How did they manage it? There is no doubt that if the Allied Powers had been united and bent on crushing the Bolsheviks they could have done so in the early days. Having disposed of Germany they had vast armies to play with. But it was not so easy to use these armies anywhere and especially against the Soviets. They were all war-weary and another demand on them for foreign warfare would have met with refusal. There was also a great deal of sympathy among the workers for the new Russia and the Allied governments were afraid of having to face trouble at home if they declared open war against the Soviets. As it was, Europe seemed to be on the verge of revolt. And thirdly there was the mutual rivalry of the Allied Powers. With the coming of peace they started bickering and quarrelling among themselves. All this

prevented a determined attempt on their part to put an end to the Bolsheviks. They tried to bring this about indirectly as far as possible by getting others to fight for them and supplying them with money, arms and expert advice. They felt sure that the Soviets could not last.

All this helped the Soviets no doubt and gave them time to strengthen themselves. But it would be unfair to them to imagine that their victory was due to outside circumstances. Essentially, it was a victory of the self-confidence, the faith, the self-sacrifice, and the unflinching determination of the Russian people. And the wonder of it is that these people were everywhere supposed, and rightly supposed, to be lazy and ignorant, demoralised and incapable of any great effort. Freedom is a habit and if we are deprived of it for long, we are apt to forget it. These ignorant Russian peasants and workers had had little enough occasion to practice this habit. Yet the quality of the leadership of Russia was such in those days that it converted this poor human material into a strong organised nation, full of faith in its mission and confidence in itself. The Kolchaks and others of that kind were defeated not only because of the ability and determination of the Bolshevik leaders but also because the Russian peasant refused to put up with them. For him they were the representatives of the old order come to take away his newly won land and other privileges, and he decided to defend that to the death.

Towering above all others and exercising an unchallenged supremacy was Lenin. To the Russian people he became like a demi-god, the symbol of hope and faith, the wise one who knew a way out of every difficulty and whom nothing ruffled or perturbed. Next to him in those days (for he is discredited in Russian now) came Trotsky, a writer and an orator, without any previous military experience, who now set about building up a great army in the midst of Civil War and blockade. Trotsky was recklessly brave and frequently

risked his life in fighting. There was no pity in him if others showed lack of courage or want of discipline. At a critical moment in the Civil War he issued this order:

"I give warning that if any unit retreats without orders, the first to be shot down will be the commissary of the unit, and next the commander. Brave and gallant soldiers will be appointed in their places. Cowards, dastards and traitors will not escape the bullet. This I solemnly promise in the presence of the entire Red Army."

And he kept his word.

Another army order issued by Trotsky in October, 1919, is interesting as it shows how the Bolsheviks always tried to distinguish between the people and the capitalist governments, and never took up a purely national attitude.

"But, even to-day", the order runs, "when we are engaged in a bitter fight with Yudenich, the hireling of England, I demand that you never forget that there are two Englands. Besides the England of profits, of violence, bribery and blood-thirstiness, there is the England of labour, of spiritual power, of high ideals of international solidarity. It is the base and dishonest England of the Stock Exchange manipulators that is fighting us. The England of labour and the people is with us."

Something of the doggedness with which the Red Army was made to fight can be seen in the decision to defend Petrograd when it was on the point of falling to Yudenitch. The decree of the Council of Defence was: "To defend Petrograd to the last ounce of blood, to refuse to yield a foot, and to carry the struggle into the streets of the city".

Maxim Gorki, the great Russian writer, tells us that Lenin once said of Trotsky:

"Well show me another man who would be able, within a year, to organize an almost exemplary army and moreover to win the respect of the military specialists. We have such a man. We have everything. And miracles are still going to happen."

This Red Army grew with leaps and bounds. In December, 1917, soon after the Bolsheviks had seized

power, the strength of the army was 435,000. After Brest Litovsk much of this must have melted away and had to be built up afresh. By the middle of 1919 the strength was 1,500,000. A year later it had risen to the prodigious total of 5,300,000.

Trotsky became a great hero in Russia, and yet he was not human as Lenin was, and so was not loved as Lenin was. Apart from Lenin, he could never get on with the old Bolsheviks. Immediately after Lenin's death they fell out with each other and Trotsky, this great hero of the Revolution and creator of the Red Army, was banished from Russia.

By the end of 1919 the Soviets had definitely got the better of their opponents in the Civil War. For another year, however, the war continued and there were many anxious moments. In 1920 the new State of Poland (freshly formed after the German defeat) fell out with Russia and there was war between them. All these wars practically ended by the end of 1920 and Russia at last had some peace.

Meanwhile internal difficulties had grown. War and blockade and disease and famine had reduced the country to a miserable condition. Production had gone down greatly, for farmers cannot till the fields or workers work the factories when rival armies are constantly marching over them. War communism had pulled the country through somehow but everybody had to go on tightening his belt till this process became very difficult to bear. The farmers were not interested in producing much because they said the state would take away, under the militant commission then prevailing, all the extra stuff that they produced, so why should they take the trouble? A very difficult and dangerous situation was arising. There was even a revolt of the sailors at Kronstadt near Petersburg, and strikes in Petersburg itself.

Lenin, with his genius for adapting fundamentals to existing conditions, immediately took action. He put an end to war communism, and introduced a new

policy called the New Economic Policy, or NEP for short (from the first letters). This gave greater freedom to the peasant to produce and sell his stuff, and it also permitted some private trading. It was a come away to some extent from strict communistic principles but Lenin justified it as a temporary measure. It certainly brought great relief to the people. But soon Russia had to face another terrible calamity. This was a famine due to a great drought and consequent failure of the crops over vast areas of south-east Russia. It was a dreadful famine, one of the greatest that has been known, and millions of people perished in it. Coming as it did after many years of war and Civil War and blockade and economic breakdown, and before the Soviet government had time to settle down to peace activities, it might well have broken down the whole structure of government. However the Soviet survived it as it had done its previous calamities. There was a conference of representations of European governments to consider what help they should give for famine relief. They declared that they would give no help till the Soviet government promised to pay the old Tsarist debts which it had repudiated. The money-lender was stronger than the humanitarian, and even a heartrending appeal from Russian mothers for their dying children went unheeded. But the United States of America made no condition and gave much help.

When England and other European countries refused to help in the Russian famine they were not otherwise boycotting the Soviet. Early in 1921 an Anglo-Russian trade treaty had been signed and many other countries had followed this example and signed trade treaties with the Soviet.

With eastern countries like China, Turkey, Persia and Afghanistan, the Soviet adopted a very generous policy. They gave up old Tsarist privileges and tried to be very friendly. This was in accordance with their principles of freedom for all subject and exploited peoples, but a more important motive for them was to

strengthen their own position. The imperialist Powers, like England, were often put in a false position by this generosity of Soviet Russia, and the eastern countries made comparisons which were not to the advantage of England and the other Powers.

One other important event took place in 1919 about which I must tell you. This was the founding of the Third International in Moscow by the Communist Party. I have told you in previous letters of the First International, which Karl Marx had founded, and the second International which after many brave words came to grief on the outbreak of the war of 1914. The Bolsheviks considered that the working class had been betrayed by the old workers' and socialist parties which formed this Second International. The Third International was therefore created by them, with a definitely revolutionary outlook, to wage war against capitalism and imperialism, and also against those opportunist socialists who followed a 'middle-of-the-road' policy. This International is often called the *Comintern* (from *Communist International*) and it has played a great part in propaganda in many countries. As its name implies, it is an international organisation elected by various communist parties in many different countries, but Russia, being the one country where communism has triumphed, naturally dominates the comintern. The comintern is of course different from the Soviet government, though many persons occupy leading position in both. As the comintern is avowedly an organisation for spreading revolutionary communism, it is bitterly disliked by the imperialist powers, and they are always trying to suppress its activities in their territories.

The Second International (the 'Labour and Socialist International') was also revived in western Europe after the war. To a great extent the Second and the Third Internationals have the same objective, in theory at any rate, but their ideology and methods are very different, and there is no love lost between them. They quarrel and fight and attack each other even more

than they attack the common enemy, capitalism. The Second International is now a very respectable organisation and has often provided cabinet ministers to European governments. The Third continues to be revolutionary and is therefore far from respectable.

Right through the Civil War in Russia the Red Terror, and the White Terror competed with each other in their harsh cruelty, and probably the latter surpassed the former greatly. So one would conclude from the American general's account (which I have quoted above) about Kolchak's atrocities in Siberia as well as other accounts. But there can be no doubt that the Red Terror was severe and many innocent people must have suffered. The nerves of the Bolsheviks, attacked as they were on all sides, and surrounded by conspiracies and spies, gave way and at the slightest suspicion, they punished heavily. Their political police, called the *Cheka*, especially got a bad name for this terror. It was the equivalent of the C. I. D. in India, but with greater powers.

This letter is getting long. But before I end it, I must tell you something more about Lenin. In spite of the injuries he had received when an attempt to take his life had been made in August, 1918, he had not taken much rest. He went on working at tremendous pressure and in May, 1922, came the inevitable collapse. After a little rest he was again at work, but not for long. There was a worse collapse in 1923 from which he never recovered, and on January 21, 1924, he died near Moscow.

For many days his body lay in Moscow—It was winter and the body was preserved by chemical treatment—and from all over Russia and the distant Siberian steppes came representatives of common folk, peasants and workers, men and women and children, to pay their last homage to that beloved comrade of theirs, who had pulled them out of the depths and pointed the way to a fuller life. They built him a simple and unadorned mausoleum in the beautiful Red Square of Moscow, and

there his body lies still in a glass case, and every evening an unending procession passes silently by. It is not ten years yet since he died, and already Lenin has become a mighty tradition, not only in his native Russia but in the world at large. As time passes he grows greater; he has become one of the chosen company of the world's immortals. Petrograd has become Leningrad, and almost every house in Russia has a Lenin corner or a Lenin picture. But he lives, not in monuments or pictures, but in the mighty work he did, and in the hearts of hundreds of millions of workers to-day who find inspiration in his example, and the hope of a better day.

Do not imagine that Lenin was an inhuman kind of machine, wrapped up in his work and thinking of nothing else. Absolutely devoted to his work and life mission he certainly was, and at the same time wholly without self-consciousness; he was the very embodiment of an idea. And yet he was very human, with that most human of all traits, capacity to laugh heartily. The British Agent in Moscow, Lockhart, who was there during the early perilous days of the Soviet, says that, whatever happened, Lenin was always in good humour. "Of all the public figures I have ever met he possessed the most equable temperament", says this British diplomat. Simple and straight in his talk and his work, and a hater of big words and poses. He loved music, so much so that he was almost afraid that it might affect him too much and make him soft in his work.

A colleague of Lenin's, Lunacharsky, who was for many years the Bolshevik Commissar for Education, made a curious reference to him once. He compared Lenin's persecution of the capitalists with Christ's expulsion of the money-lenders from the temple, and added that: "if Christ were alive to-day, he would be a Bolshevik". A curious comparison for irreligious people.

About women, Lenin once said that: "No nation can be free when half the population is enslaved in the

kitchen.” Very revealing was the remark he made one day, as he was petting some children. His old friend Maxim Gorky tells us that he said: “These will have happier lives than we had. They will not experience much that we lived through. There will not be so much cruelty in their lives”. Let us all hope so.

I shall finish up this letter with the words of a recent Russian composition for a full orchestra and people’s chorus. It is said by people who have heard it that the music of this piece is full of vitality and power, and the song seems to represent the spirit of the revolting masses. Even the English translation of the words, which I give here, has something of this spirit in it. The song is called *October*, and this means the Bolshevik Revolution of November, 1917. The Russian calendar in those days was, what is called, the unreformed calendar and it was thirteen days behind the ordinary western calendar. According to this calendar the revolution of March, 1917, took place in February and it is therefore called the “February Revolution”, and similarly the Bolshevik Revolution, which took place early in November, 1917, is called the “October Revolution”. Russia has changed its calendar now and adopted the reformed one, but these old names are still used. Now for the English translation of the song *October*:

We went, asking for work and for bread,
Our hearts were oppressed with anguish,
The chimneys of the factories pointed toward the sky,
like tired hands without strength to make a fist.
Louder than the common, the silence was broken by the
words of our grief and our pain.
O Lenin! the desire of calloused hands.
We have understood, Lenin, we have understood that
our lot is a struggle! Struggle! Struggle.
You led us to the last fight. Struggle!
You gave us the victory of labour.
And no one shall take away from us this victory over
ignorance and oppression.
No one! No one! Never! Never!
Let everyone be young and brave in the struggle, because
the name of our victory is October!

October! October!
October is a messenger from the sun.
October is the will of the revolting centuries!
October! It is a labour, it is a joy and a song.
October! It is good fortune for the fields and machines!
Here is the banner name of the young generation and
 Lenin!

JAPAN BULLIES CHINA

April 14, 1933

While the World War was going on, certain events took place in the Far East which deserve our attention. I shall, therefore, take you to China now. In my last letter about China I told you about the establishment of a Republic there, and of the troubles that followed. Attempts were made to re-establish the empire. These failed; but the Republic did not succeed in establishing its authority over the whole country, or rather, no single government succeeded in doing so. Ever since then there has been no authority which ruled without challenge over the whole of China. For some years there were two principal governments in the country, the Northern and the Southern. In the south Dr. Sun Yat-sen and his national party, the Kuo-Min-Tang, were supreme. In the north there was Yuan Shih-Kai in command, and after him came a succession of generals and military men. *Tuchuns* these military adventurers were and are called; they have been the curse of China during recent years.

China was thus in the unhappy condition of continuous disorder and often of Civil War between north and south, or between rival *Tuchuns*. It was an ideal opportunity for the imperialist powers to intrigue and try to profit by these internal dissensions by encouraging one party or *Tuchun* and then another. That was the way, you will remember, the English established themselves in India. The European powers took advantage of the opportunity, and started intriguing and playing off one *Tuchun* against another. But soon their own troubles and the World War put an end to their

activities in the Far East.

It was not so in the case of Japan. All the main fighting of the war was far away, and Japan felt perfectly safe in carrying on her old activities in China. Indeed she was then in a far better position to do so because the other Powers were otherwise engaged and not likely to interfere. She declared war against Germany simply to get hold of the German concession of Kianchan in China and then to push on further inland.

Japanese policy in regard to China has shown a remarkable consistency for the last two score years. As soon as they had modernised their army and pushed on the industrialisation of their country, they decided that they must become dominant in China. They wanted room to spread out and expand their industries, and Korea and China were both near and weak, and seemed to invite dominance and exploitation. The first attempt they made was the war with China of 1894-95. They succeeded, but did not get as much as they wanted because of the opposition of some European Powers. Then came the more difficult struggle with Russia in 1904. They won in this too, and established themselves firmly in Korea and Manchuria. Korea was soon after annexed, and became a part of the Japanese Empire.

Manchuria, however, remained part of China. It forms, and is referred to as, the three eastern provinces of China. The Japanese simply took over the Russian concessions there, including the railway they had built, called till then the Chinese Eastern Railway. The name of this railway was changed to South Manchurian Railway. Japan now started getting a good grip of Manchuria. Meanwhile the railway attracted immigrants from the rest of over-populated China, and Chinese peasants poured in. A kind of bean, called the soya bean, flourished in Manchuria, and a world demand developed for this because of its valuable properties. Among other products, a kind of oil is made from this bean. This soya bean cultivation also drew immigrants. So, while the Japanese tried to get full control of the

economic machinery of Manchuria from the top, Chinese from the south poured in and peopled the land. The old Manchu people were drowned in this sea of Chinese peasants and others and became fully Chinese in culture and outlook themselves.

Japan did not fancy the coming of the Republic in China. She disapproved of anything that might strengthen China, and her whole diplomacy was aimed at preventing the consolidation of China into one strong state. So she took a very active interest in helping one *Tuchun* against another, so that the internal disorder might continue.

It is easy to blame Japan or the western Powers for their deliberate attempts to keep China from settling down. They were to blame. And yet the fundamental reason was the weakness of China herself. Just as in India, whenever the English government succeeds in dividing the nationalist ranks, the real reason is the weakness of the nationalists. The mere fact that the English succeed in this policy of division is a measure of their superiority in that respect at least.

The Young Republic of China had the most tremendous problems to face. It was not merely a question of seizing political power from the dying imperial government. There was little of political power to seize for such central power hardly existed. It had to be created. The old China was an empire in name; in effect it was a collection of a large number of autonomous areas loosely strung together. The provinces were more or less autonomous, and so were even the towns and villages. The authority of the central government or emperor was recognised, but this government did not interfere in local matters. There was no "unitary" state as it is called, with power and the actual government concentrated in the centre, and uniformity in the various aspects of government. It was this loosely attached (in a political sense) state that had broken up because of the impacts of western industry and imperialist greed. If China was to survive, it was

now felt that China must become a strong centralised state with a uniform system of government. Thus the new Republic wanted to create such a state. It was something new, and hence it became one of the great difficulties facing the Republic. Her want of proper communications, roads and railways, itself has been a tremendous barrier in the way of political unity.

In the past the Chinese people had attached little importance to political power as such. Their whole mighty civilization was based on culture and it taught, in a way which has not been equalled elsewhere, the art of living. They were so full of this old culture of theirs that, even when their political and economic structure fell down, they clung to the old cultural ways. Japan had deliberately adopted western industry and western ways, and yet at heart remained feudal. China was not feudal; it was full of rationalism and the spirit of science, and it looked with eagerness towards western developments in science and industry. And yet she did not rush in where Japan had rushed in. There were no doubt many difficulties in her way which Japan did not have. But still there was also a hesitation to do anything which might mean a complete break with the old culture. China has the philosopher's temperament and philosophers do not act hastily. In her mind there was, and is, a great ferment; for the problems she had to face were not merely political, they were economic and social and intellectual and educational, and so on.

And then again the very size of huge countries like China and India creates difficulties. They are continental countries and have something of the heaviness of a continent about them. When an elephant falls, he takes his time to get up; he can not jump up like a cat or a dog.

When the World War began, Japan immediately joined the Allies and declared war on Germany. She took possession of Kianchan and then began spreading out inland over the Shantung province, in which Kianchan is situated. This meant that the Japanese were

invading China proper. There was no question of operations against Germany, as Germany had nothing to do with this area. The Chinese government politely asked them to go back. What arrogance, said the Japanese, and forthwith they produced an official note containing twenty-one demands.

These 'twenty-one Demands' became famous. I shall not give them here. They meant the transfer of all manner of rights and privileges to Japan, especially in Manchuria, Mongolia and in the province of Shantung. The result of agreeing to these demands would have been to convert China practically into a colony of Japan. The feeble northern Chinese government objected to these demands, but what could they do against the powerful Japanese army? And then this Chinese government in the north was itself not a popular one with its own people. However, it did one thing which helped. The Japanese demands were published. There was a tremendous outcry immediately in China, and even the other Powers, busy as they were with the war, were much put out. America especially objected. The result was that Japan withdrew some of her demands and modified others and, as to the rest, she succeeded in bullying the Chinese government into accepting them in May, 1915. This resulted in intense anti-Japanese feeling in China.

In August, 1917, three years after the war had begun, China joined the Allies and declared war on Germany. This was rather ridiculous as China could do nothing at all to Germany. The whole object was to put herself right with the Allies and to save herself from the further embraces of Japan.

The Bolshevik Revolution of November, 1917, came soon after, and this was followed by a great deal of disorder all over north Asia. Siberia was one battleground for Soviet and anti-Soviet forces. Kolchak, the Russian white general, operated from Siberia against the Soviets. The Japanese, alarmed by the Soviet triumph, sent a large army to Siberia. British and

American troops were also sent there. For a while Russian influence disappeared from Siberia and central Asia. The British government tried their best to put an end completely to Russian prestige in these areas. In the heart of Central Asia, in Kashgar, the British set up a wireless station for anti-Bolshevik propaganda.

In Mongolia also there was a fierce fight between Soviet and anti-Soviet people. As early as 1915, while the Great War was going on, Mongolia had succeeded, with help from Tsarist Russia, in gaining a great deal of autonomy from the Chinese government. China remained suzerain, however, and Russia was also given a footing there in regard to Mongolia's foreign relations. It was a curious arrangement. After the Soviet Revolution there was Civil War in Mongolia in which the local Soviets won after three years or more of struggle. The present position of Mongolia is still more curious. It is an independent republic associated with the Union of Soviet Republics, and yet in theory, I believe, it recognizes still the suzerainty of China.

I have not told you yet about the peace conference that followed the World War. I shall have to deal with that in another letter. I might mention here, however, that the big Powers at this conference, and this meant especially England, France and the U. S. A., decided to present the Shantung province of China to Japan. Thus as a result of the war China, their ally, was actually made to give up a part of her territory. The reason for this was some secret war time treaty between England, France and Japan. Whatever the reason may have been, this shabby trick on China was deeply resented by the Chinese people and they threatened the Peking government with revolution if it compromised on the matter. A strict boycott of Japanese goods was also proclaimed and anti-Japanese riots took place. The Chinese government (by which I mean the northern Peking government, which was the principal government) refused to sign the Peace Treaty.

Two years later a conference was held in Washing-

ton, United States, at which this question of Shantung cropped up. The conference was of all the powers interested in Far Eastern questions and they had met to discuss the strength of their navies. Several important results followed, so far as China and Japan were concerned, from this Washington Conference of 1922. Japan agreed to hand back Shantung, and so one question which had been agitating the Chinese people tremendously was disposed of. Two important agreements were also reached between the Powers.

One of these was known as the "Four-Power Pact", between America, Great Britain, Japan and France. These four Powers pledged themselves mutually to respect the territorial integrity of their various possessions in the Pacific, that is to say, they promised not to encroach on each other's territories. The other agreement, known as the "Nine-Power Treaty", was between all the nine powers attending—U. S. A., Belgium, Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Holland, Portugal and China. The very first article of this treaty began thus:

"To respect the sovereignty, the independence and the territorial and administrative integrity of China."

I am telling you about this Four-Power Pact and the Nine-Power Treaty because they are very much before us just at present and the newspapers often refer to them. Both these agreements were obviously meant to protect China from further aggression. They were meant to stop the old game of concession hunting and even annexations which the Powers had so far played. The western Powers had their hands full with the after war problems and, for the moment, were not interested in China. Hence this self-denying ordinance to which they solemnly pledged themselves. Japan also pledged herself to this although it conflicted with her deliberate policy which she had followed for many years. Before many years were over it was quite clear that Japan's old policy continued in spite of all agreements and

pledges to the contrary. It has been an extraordinarily barefaced example of international lying and hypocrisy. As I write this a Japanese invasion of China is going on. To understand the background of what is happening I had to take you to the Washington Conference.

About the time of the Washington Conference also the final withdrawal of foreign troops from Siberia took place. The Japanese were the last to go. Immediately the local Soviets came to the front and joined the Soviet Republic of Russia.

The Russian Soviet had early in its career addressed the Chinese government and offered to give up all the special privileges which Tsarist Russia had enjoyed in China, in common with other imperialist Powers. Imperialism and communism could hardly go together, and, even apart from this, the Soviet deliberately adopted a generous policy towards eastern countries which had long been exploited or threatened by the western Powers. This was not only good morals but sound policy for Soviet Russia as it created friends in the East. The Soviet's offer to give up special privileges was not a conditional one; it sought nothing in return. In spite of this the Chinese government was afraid of dealing with the Soviets lest they anger the western European Powers. At length, however, Russian and Chinese representatives met and in 1924 agreed to certain terms. Learning of this agreement the French, American and Japanese governments protested to the Peking government, and Peking was so frightened at this that it actually disavowed the signature of its representative on the agreement. To such a pass was the unhappy Peking government reduced! Thereupon the Russian representative published the whole text of the agreement. It created quite a sensation. For the first time in her contacts with the Powers, China had been treated honourably and decently and had her rights recognised. It was her first equal treaty with a great Power. The Chinese people were delighted with it, and the government had to sign it. It was quite natural for the

imperialist Powers to dislike it for it put them in a very unfavourable light. While Soviet Russia gave generously, they stuck on to all their special privileges.

The Soviet government also got into touch with Dr. Sun-Yat-sen's southern Chinese government, which had its headquarters at C anton, and they came to a mutual understanding. During most of this time a feeble kind of Civil War was going on between north and south, and between various military commanders in the north. These northern *Tuchuns*, or super-*Tuchuns* as some of them were called, fought for no principles or programme; they fought for personal power. They allied themselves to each other and then crossed over to the other side, and formed a new combination. These ever changing combinations were very confusing to the outsider. These *Tuchuns*, or military adventurers, raised private armies, imposed private taxes and carried on their private wars, and the burden of all this fell on the long suffering Chinese people. Behind some of these super-*Tuchuns*, it was said, were foreign powers, and especially Japan. Help and money came to them also from the big foreign business houses in Shanghai.

The one bright spot was the south, where Dr. Sun-Yat-sen's government functioned. This had ideals and a policy and was not merely a brigand's affair as some of the northern Tuchun's governments were. In 1924 the first National Congress of the Kuo-Min-Tang, the People's Party, was held, and Dr. Sun placed a manifesto before it. In this manifesto he laid down the principles which should guide the nation. This manifesto and these principles have since been the basis of the Kuo-Min-Tang, and even now they are supposed to guide the general policy of the so-called National Government.

In March, 1925, Dr. Sun died after a life worn out in China's service, and beloved by the Chinese people.

INDIA DURING WAR TIME

April 16, 1933

India, as a part of the British Empire, was of course directly involved in the World War. But there was no actual fighting in or near India. None-the-less the war influenced developments in India in a variety of ways, both directly and indirectly, and thus brought about considerable changes. Her resources were used up to the fullest extent to help the Allies.

It was not India's war. India had no grievance against the German powers, and, as for Turkey, there was great sympathy for her. But India had no choice in the matter. She was but a dependency of Britain, forced to toe the line of her imperialist mistress. And so, in spite of much resentment in the country, Indian soldiers fought against Turks and Egyptians and others, and made India's name bitterly disliked in western Asia.

As I have told you in a previous letter, politics were at a low ebb in India on the eve of the war. The coming of the war still further diverted attention from them, and numerous war measures, taken by the British government, made real political activity difficult. A war period is always considered by governments a sufficient excuse for suppressing everybody else and doing just what they like themselves. The only license permitted is license for themselves. A censorship is established which suppresses truth, often spreads falsehoods, and prevents criticism. Special acts and regulations are passed to control almost every form of national activity. This was done in all the warring countries and, naturally, it was done in India also, where a "Defence of India Act" was passed. Public criticism of

the war or anything connected with it was thus effectively checked. Yet in the background there was an almost universal sympathy with the German Powers and especially with Turkey, or perhaps it would be more correct to say that there was a desire that Britain should get a hard knock. This impotent wish was natural enough among those who had themselves been knocked about sufficiently. But there was no public expression of it.

In public, loud shouts of loyalty to Britain filled the air. Most of this shouting was done by the ruling princes, and some of it by the upper middle classes who came into contact with the government. To a slight extent the bourgeoisie was also taken in by the brave declarations of the Allies about democracy and liberty and the freedom of nationalities. Perhaps, it was thought, this might apply to India also, and it was hoped that help rendered then to Britain, in her hour of need, might meet with a suitable reward later. In any event, there was no choice in the matter, and there was no other safe way; so they might as well make the best of a bad job.

This outward display of loyalty in India was much appreciated in England in those days, and there was many an expression of gratitude. It was stated by those in authority that, after this, England would look at India with a "new angle of vision".

But there were some Indians, both in India and in foreign countries, who did not adopt this 'loyal' attitude. They did not even remain quiet and passive as the great majority did. They believed, according to the old Irish maxim, that England's difficulty was their country's opportunity. In particular, some Indians in Germany and in other countries of Europe gathered together in Berlin to devise means to help England's enemies, and formed a committee for this purpose. The German government was naturally eager to accept help of every kind, and they welcomed these Indian revolutionaries. A regular written agreement was arrived at and signed

by the two parties—the German government and the Indian Committee—in which, among other things, the Indians promised to help the German government in war on the understanding that, in the event of victory, Germany would insist on Indian freedom. This Indian Committee thereupon worked on behalf of Germany throughout the war. They carried on propaganda among the Indian troops that were sent abroad, and their activities spread right up to Afghanistan and the north-west frontier of India. But, apart from causing a great deal of anxiety to the British, they did not succeed in doing much. An attempt to send arms to India by sea was frustrated by the British. The German defeat in the war put an end automatically to this Committee and its hopes.

In India also there were some instances of revolutionary activity, and special tribunals were appointed to try conspiracy cases, and many were sentenced to death and many to long terms of imprisonment. Some of the persons sentenced then are still in prison—after eighteen years!

As the war proceeded, a handful of people made huge profits, as elsewhere, but the great majority felt the strain more and more and discontent grew. The demand for more men for the front went on growing and recruiting for the army became very intense. All manner of inducements and rewards were offered to those who brought in recruits, and zamindars were made to supply fixed quotas of recruits from among their tenants. In the Punjab especially these 'press-gang' methods, that is forced recruiting, were employed to get men for the army and the labour corps. The total number of men that went from India to the various fronts, both as soldiers and in the labour corps, amounted to over a million. These methods were greatly resented by the people concerned, and are supposed to have been one of the causes for the after war troubles in the Punjab.

The Punjab was also affected in another way.

Many Punjabis, and especially Sikhs, had emigrated to California in the United States and to British Columbia in western Canada. A stream of emigrants continued to go till it was stopped by the American and Canadian authorities. In order to put difficulties in the way of such immigrants, the Canadian government made a rule that only such immigrants would be admitted as came direct from port to port without having changed ships on the way. This was just meant to prevent Indian immigrants as they had invariably to change ships in China or Japan. Thereupon a Sikh, Baba Gurdit Singh, engaged a whole ship, named the 'Komagata Maru' and carried a crowd of immigrants with him from Calcutta all the way to Vancouver in Canada. He had thus cleverly got over the Canadian law, but none-the-less Canada was not going to have him, and none of the immigrants were allowed to land. They were sent back in the same ship, and they reached India destitute and very angry. There was quite a little battle with the police at Budge Budge, Calcutta, resulting in many deaths chiefly amongst the Sikhs. Many of these Sikhs were subsequently shadowed and hunted all over the Punjab. These people also spread anger and discontent in the Punjab, and the whole 'Komagata Maru' incident was resented all over India.

It is difficult to know all that happened in those war days because the censorship would not allow many kinds of news to appear, and consequently wild rumours used to spread. It is known, however, that a big mutiny in an Indian regiment took place in Singapore, and there was trouble on a smaller scale in many other places.

Apart from supplying men for the war and helping in other ways, India was also made to provide hard cash. This was called a 'gift' from India. A hundred million pounds were paid in this way on one occasion and, later, another big sum. To call this enforced contribution from a poor country a 'gift' does credit to the sense of humour of the British government.

All this that I have told you so far consisted of the

less important consequences of the war, so far as India was concerned. But a far more fundamental change was being brought about by the war time conditions. During the war India's foreign trade, like the foreign trade of other countries, was wholly upset. The vast quantity of British goods that used to come to India were now very largely cut off. The German submarines were sinking ships in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, and trade could not be carried on under these conditions India had thus to provide for herself and supply her own needs. She had also to supply the government with all manner of things needed for the war. So that Indian industries grew rapidly, both the old industries, like the textile and jute, and new war time industries. Tata's iron and steel works, which had so far been cold-shouldered by the government, now assumed tremendous importance as they could produce war material. They were more or less run under government control.

For the war years, therefore, capitalists in India, both British and Indian, had an open field and little competition from abroad. They made full use of this opportunity and profited by it at the cost of the poor Indian masses. Prices of goods were put up and incredible dividends were declared. But the workers, whose labour produced these dividends and profit, saw little change in their miserable conditions. Their wages went up a little, but the prices of the necessities of life went up far more, and so their position actually became worse.

But the capitalists prospered greatly and accumulated huge profits which they wanted to invest again in industry. For the first time Indian capitalists were strong enough to bring pressure on the government. Even apart from this pressure the force of events had forced the British government to help Indian industry during war time. The demand for further industrialisation of the country led to the importation of more machinery from abroad, as such machinery could not then be made in India. So that in place of

manufactured goods coming from England to India we find now more machinery coming.

All this involved a great change in British policy in India; a century old policy was given up and a new one adopted in its place. British imperialism, adapting itself to changing conditions, changed its face completely. You will remember my telling you of the early stages of British rule in India. The first was the eighteenth century stage of plunder and carrying away of hard cash. Then came the second stage when British rule was firmly established, and which lasted for over a hundred years, right up to the war. This was to keep India as a field of raw material and a market for Britain's manufactured goods. Big industry was discouraged here in every way, and India's economic development prevented. Now, during war time, comes the third stage when big industry in India is encouraged by the British government, and this is done in spite of the fact that it conflicts to some extent with Britain's manufactures. Thus it is obvious that if the Indian textile industry is encouraged, Lancashire will suffer to that extent because India has been Lancashire's best customer. Why then should the British government make this change in its policy to the detriment of Lancashire and other British industries? I have already shown how its hands were forced by war conditions. Let us consider these reasons for the change in detail:

1. War time demands automatically forced the issue and pushed on industrialisation in India.

2. This increases the Indian capitalist class and strengthens it, so that they demand more and more facilities for the growth of industry, to afford them an opportunity to invest their surplus funds. Britain is not in a position now to ignore them completely, as this might alienate them completely and lead them to support the more extreme and revolutionary elements in the country, which were growing stronger. Therefore, it was desirable to keep them, if possible, on the British side by giving them some opportunities for

growth.

3. The surplus money of the capitalist class in England also seeks opportunities for investment in undeveloped countries as profits are greater there. England itself being highly industrialised, there are no such favourable opportunities of investment there. Profits are not so great and, owing to the strength of the organised labour movement, labour troubles frequent. In undeveloped areas labour is weak, and hence wages low and profits high. British capitalists naturally prefer investing in undeveloped areas under British control, such as India. Thus British capital comes to India and this leads to still further industrialisation.

4. The experience of the War showed that only highly industrialised countries can carry on a war effectively. Tsarist Russia broke down ultimately in the war because it was not sufficiently industrialised and had to rely on other countries. England fears that the next war may be a war with Soviet Russia at the Indian frontier. If India has not got her own big industries, the British government will not be able to carry on the war properly on the frontier. This is too great a risk. Therefore, again, India should be industrialised.

For these reasons, inevitably, British policy changed and the industrialisation of India was decided upon. The larger imperial policy of Britain demanded it, even at the cost of Lancashire and some other British industries. Of course Britain made out that this change was due to the British government's exceeding love of India and her good. Having decided upon this policy, Britain took steps to ensure that the real control of the new industry in India would remain in the hands of British capitalists. The Indian capitalist is obligingly taken as a very junior partner in the concern.

In 1916, during war time, an Indian Industrial Commission was appointed, and two years later it reported, recommending that industries should be encouraged by government, and that new industrial methods should be introduced in agriculture. It also

suggested that an attempt should be made to give universal primary education. As in the early days of factory development in England, mass elementary education was considered necessary in order to produce skilled labour.

This Commission was followed after the War by a host of other commissions and committees. It was even suggested that Indian industries should be protected by duties, tariffs these are called. All this was considered a great victory for Indian industry. And so, to some extent, it was. But a closer analysis revealed certain interesting features. It was proposed to encourage foreign capital, which meant in effect British capital, to come to India; and British capital poured in. It was not only predominant but overwhelmingly so. The vast majority of the big concerns were financed by British capital. So that tariff duties and protection in India resulted in protecting British capital in India! The great change in British policy in India had not proved so bad after all for the British capitalist. He had got a good sheltered market to spread out in and make his dividends with the help of low wages to his workers. This proved to be advantageous to him in another way also. Having invested his capital in India, China, Egypt and such countries, where wages were low, he threatened the English workers in England with a reduction of wages. He told them that he could not otherwise compete with the products of low wages in India, China, etc. And if the English workman objected to having his wages cut down, the capitalist told him that he would be regretfully compelled to shut up his factory in England and invest the capital elsewhere.

The British government in India took many other steps also to control industry in India. This is a complicated subject, and I feel that I am on slippery ground when I discuss it. So we need not trouble ourselves about these matters. One thing I might mention. Banks play a very important part in modern industry,

because big businesses often require credit. The best of businesses may fail suddenly if these credit facilities are denied it. As the banks give this credit you can appreciate what a lot of power they must have. They can make or mar a business. Soon after the War the British government amalgamated several banks into one single Imperial Bank of India, which is under its full control, and which in its turn can exercise a great deal of control over the many smaller banks in the country. In this way the government can exercise vast power over Indian industries and firms.

As a reward for all the great things the British were doing to Indian industry (we have seen what these great things were), they wanted preference for their goods, 'imperial preference' it is sometimes called. This meant that if foreign goods are taxed for tariff purposes, British goods should be taxed less or not taxed at all, so that British goods may have an advantage over the others. They have recently managed to get this preference.

The growing strength of the Indian capitalist classes and upper bourgeoisie during the war began to show itself in the political movement also. Politics gradually came out of the pre-war and early war lull and various demands for self-government and the like began to be made. Lokamanya Tilak came out of prison after completing his long term. The National Congress then, as I have told you, was in the hands of the moderate group and was a small unimportant body having little touch with the people. As the more advanced politicians were not in the Congress, they organised Home Rule Leagues. Two such leagues were started, one by Lokamanya Tilak and the other by Mrs. Annie Besant. For some years Mrs. Besant played an important part in Indian politics, and her great eloquence and powerful advocacy did much to revive interest in politics. The government considered her propaganda so dangerous that they even interned her, together with two of her colleagues, for some months. She presided over a session

of the Congress in Calcutta and was its first woman president. Some years later Mrs. Sarojini Naidu was the second woman president of the Congress.

In 1916 a compromise was arrived at between the two wings of the Congress, the Moderate and the Extremist, and both of them attended the Lucknow session held in December, 1916. The compromise was of short duration for within two years there was another split and the moderates, now calling themselves Liberals, walked away from the Congress, and they have kept away ever since.

The Lucknow Congress of 1916 marks the revival of the National Congress. From that time onwards it grew in strength and importance and, for the first time in its history, began to be really a national organisation of the bourgeoisie or middle classes. It had nothing to do with the masses as such and they were not interested in it till Bapu came. So that both the so-called Moderates and Extremists represented more or less the same class, the bourgeoisie. The Moderates representing or rather being themselves, a handful of prosperous people and those on the border line of government service; the Extremists had the sympathy of the greater part of the middle classes and had many unemployed intellectuals within their ranks. These intellectuals (and by this I mean simply more or less educated people) stiffened their ranks and also provided recruits to the ranks of the revolutionaries. There was no great difference in the objective or ideals of the Moderates or the Extremists. They both talked of self-government within the British Empire, and both were prepared to accept a part of it for the time being, the Extremist wanting more than the Moderate and using stronger language. The handful of revolutionaries of course wanted a full measure of freedom but they had little influence with the leadership of the Congress. The essential difference between the Moderates and the Extremists was that the former were a prosperous party of Haves and some hangers-on of Haves, and the

Extremists had a number of Have-nots also and, as the more extreme party, naturally attracted the youth of the country, most of whom thought that strong language was a sufficient substitute for action. Of course these generalisations do not apply to all the individuals on either side; for instance, there was Gopal Krishna Gokhale, a very able and self-sacrificing leader of the Moderates, who was certainly not a Have. It was he who founded the Servants of India Society. But neither the Moderates nor the Extremists had anything to do with the real Have-nots, the workers and the peasants. Tilak was, however, personally popular with the masses.

The Lucknow Congress of 1916 was notable for another reunion, a Hindu-Muslim one. The Congress had always clung to a national basis, but in effect it was a Hindu organisation, because of the overwhelming majority of Hindus in it. Some years before the war the Muslim intelligentsia, egged on to some extent by the government, had organised a separate body for themselves called the All-India Muslim League. This was meant to keep the Muslims away from the Congress, but soon it drifted towards the Congress, and at Lucknow there was an agreement between the two about the future constitution of India. This was called the Congress-League Scheme and it laid down, among other things, the proportion of seats to be reserved for the Muslim minorities. This Congress-League Scheme then became the joint programme which was accepted as the country's demand. It represented the views of the bourgeoisie, who were the only politically minded people at the time. Agitation grew on the basis of this scheme.

The Muslims had grown more politically-minded and had joined hands with the Congress largely because of their exasperation at the British fighting Turkey. Because of sympathy for Turkey and a vigorous expression of it, two Muslim leaders, the Maulanas Mohamad Ali and Shaukat Ali had been interned early in the war. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was also interned because

of his connections with Arab countries, where he was very popular owing to his writings. All this served to irritate and annoy the Muslims and they turned away from the government more and more.

As the demand for self-government grew in India, the British government made various promises and started enquiries in India which occupied the people's attention. In the summer of 1918 the then Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy presented a joint report—called, from their respective names, the Montagu-Chelmsford Report—which embodied certain proposals for reforms and changes in India. Immediately a great argument arose in the country over these tentative proposals. The Congress strongly disapproved of them and considered them insufficient. The Liberals welcomed them, and, because of them, they parted company with the Congress. Indeed, for some time previously they had been feeling very uncomfortable in the company of the new type of Congressmen.

So matters stood in India when the War ended. Everywhere there was a lively expectation of change. The political barometer was rising, and the mild and soothing, the somewhat apologetic and ineffective, whispers of the Moderates were giving place to the more confident, aggressive, direct, and truculent shouts of the Extremists. But both the Moderates and the Extremists thought and talked in terms of politics and the outward structure of government; behind them British imperialism went on quietly strengthening its hold on the economic life of the country.

THE NEW MAP OF EUROPE

April 21, 1933

After we had considered briefly the course of the World War, we went on to the Russian Revolution, and then to the state of India during war time. Let us now go back to the Armistice, which put an end to the war and see how the victors behaved. Germany was prostrate. The Kaiser had run away, and a republic had been proclaimed. Still to make sure that the German army would become quite powerless, many hard conditions were laid down in the terms of the Armistice. The German army had to leave not only all invaded territory but also Alsace-Lorraine and part of Germany up to the Rhine. The Allies were to occupy the Rheinland, the territory round about Cologne. Germany had also to surrender many battleships and all her U-boats, as her submarines were called, and thousands of heavy guns and aeroplanes and railway engines and lorries and other material.

On the spot where the Armistice was signed, in the forest of Compiègne in northern France, there is a monument now which bears this legend:

"Ici le November 11, 1918, succomba le criminel orgueil de l'Empire Allemand vaincu par les peuples libres qu'il prétendait asservir"—Here, on November 11, 1918, succumbed the criminal pride of the German Empire, vanquished by the free peoples whom it had sought to enslave.

The German Empire had indeed gone, outwardly at any rate, and Prussian military arrogance had been humbled. Even before this, the Russian Empire had ceased to be and the House of Romanoff had been

marched off from the stage where it had misbehaved so long. The war proved the grave of yet a third empire and ancient dynasty, the Austro-Hungarian Empire of the Hapsburgs. But other empires still remained—they were among the victors—and victory did not lessen their pride or make them more regardful of the rights of other peoples whom they had enslaved.

The victorious Allies held their Peace Conference in Paris in 1919. In Paris was the world's future to be fashioned by them, and for many months this famous city became the centre of the world's attention. To it there journeyed all manner of folk from far and near. There were statesmen and politicians of course, feeling vastly important, and diplomats, and experts, and military men, and financiers, and profiteers, all of them with hosts of assistants and typists and clerks. There was of course an army of journalists. There came representatives from peoples struggling for freedom, like the Irish and the Egyptians and Arabs and others whose names even had not been previously heard; and peoples from Eastern Europe wanting to carve out separate states for themselves out of the ruins of the Austrian and Turkish Empires. And of course there were hosts of adventurers. The world was going to be divided anew and the vultures were not going to miss this opportunity.

Much was expected of the Peace Conference. People hoped that after the terrible experience of the war, a just and enduring peace would be devised. The tremendous strain was telling on the masses still and there was great discontent among the labouring classes. Prices of the necessities of life had risen greatly and this added to the people's suffering. There were many signs in Europe, in 1919 of impending social revolution. The example of Russia seemed to be a catching one.

This was the background of the Peace Conference which met at Versailles in the very hall where, forty-eight years before, the German empire had been proclaimed. It was difficult for the huge conference to

function from day to day, and so it was split up into many committees which met in private and carried on their intrigues and quarrels behind a discreet veil. The conference was controlled by a 'Council of Ten' of the Allies. This was reduced later to five, the 'Big Five' as they were called: United States, Britain, France, Italy and Japan. Japan dropped out of this and so a 'Council of Four' remained; and lastly Italy dropped out leaving the 'Big Three': America, Britain and France. These three countries were represented by President Wilson, Lloyd George, and Clemenceau, and to these three men fell the great task of moulding the world afresh and healing its terrible wounds. It was a task worthy of supermen, demigods; and these three men were very far from being either. Men in authority—kings, statesmen, generals and the like—are advertised and boomed up so much by the press and otherwise that they often appear as giants of thought and action to the common people. A kind of halo seems to surround them, and in our ignorance we attribute to them many qualities which they are far from possessing. But on closer acquaintance they turn out to be very ordinary persons. A famous Austrian statesman once said that the world would be astounded if it knew with how little intelligence it is ruled. So these three, the 'Big Three', big as they seemed, were singularly limited in outlook and ignorant of international affairs, ignorant even of geography!

President Woodrow Wilson came with a vast reputation and popularity. He had used so many beautiful and idealistic phrases in his speeches and notes that people had begun to look upon him almost as a prophet of the new freedom that was to come. Lloyd George, the prime minister of Great Britain, was also a weaver of fine phrases, but he had a reputation for opportunism. Clemenceau, the 'Tiger' as he was called, had no use for ideals and pious phrases. He was out to crush France's old enemy Germany, crush her and humble her in every way so that she may not be able

to raise her head again.

So these three struggled with each other and pulled each his own way, and each in his turn was pulled and pushed by numerous other people in the Conference and outside. And behind them all lay the shadow of Soviet Russia. Russia was not represented at the Conference, neither was Germany; but Soviet Russia's very existence was a continuing challenge to all the capitalist Powers assembled in Paris.

Clemenceau won in the end, with the help of Lloyd George. Wilson got one of the things he was very keen on—a League of Nations—and having got the others to agree to this, he gave in on most other points. After many months of argument and debate the Allies at the Peace Conference at last agreed to a draft treaty, and, having agreed amongst themselves, they summoned the German representatives to hear their commands. The enormous draft treaty of 440 articles was hurled at these Germans and they were called upon to sign it. There was no argument with them, no opportunity was given them to make suggestions or changes. It was going to be a dictated peace; and they must either sign it as it was, or take the consequences. The representatives of the new German Republic protested, and, on the very last day of grace, signed this Treaty of Versailles.

Separate treaties were drawn up and signed by the Allies with Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey. The Turkish treaty, though agreed to by the then Sultan, fell through because of the splendid resistance of Kemal Pasha and his brave companions. But that is a story I must tell you separately.

What changes did these treaties bring about? Most of the territorial changes were in Eastern Europe, Western Asia and Africa. In Africa the German colonies were seized by the Allies as spoils of war, England getting the choicest morsels. By adding Tanganyika and other territories in East Africa, the British succeeding in realising a long cherished dream

of a continuous strip of empire right across Africa, from Egypt in the north to the Cape in the south.

In Europe the changes were considerable and quite a large number of new States appeared on the map. Compare an old map with a new one, and you will see these great changes at a glance. Some of the changes were the result of the Russian Revolution as many of the peoples who lived on the borders of Russia, and were not themselves Russian, cut away from the Soviet and declared their independence. The Soviet government recognised their rights of self-determination and did not interfere. Look at the new map of Europe. One big state, Austria-Hungary, has disappeared entirely, and in its place have risen several small states, which are often referred to as the Austrian Succession States. These are: Austria, reduced to a tiny fragment of its former self and with a great big city like Vienna as its capital; Hungary, also much reduced in size, Czechoslovakia which include the old Bohemia; part of Yugo-slavia, which is our old and unpleasant acquaintance, Serbia, blotted out of all recognition; and parts have gone to Rumania, Poland and Italy. It was a thorough dissection.

Further to the north there is another new state, or rather an old state has reappeared—Poland. This was fashioned out of territories from Prussia, Russia and Austria. In order to give Poland access to the sea quite an extraordinary feat was accomplished. Germany, or rather Prussia, was cut into two and a corridor of land leading to the sea was given to Poland. So that in order to go from west Russia to East Prussia one has to cross this Polish corridor. Near this corridor is the famous city of Danzig. This has been converted into a free city, that is, it belongs neither to Germany nor to the Polish State; it is a state by itself, directly under the League of Nations.

North of Poland are the Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland, all successors of the old Tsarist Empire. They are small states but each is a

distinct cultural entity with a separate language. You will be interested to know that the Lithuanians are Aryans (like many others in Europe) and their language bears quite a close resemblance to Sanskrit. This is a remarkable fact, which probably many people in India do not realise, and which brings home to us the bonds which unite distant people.

The only other territorial change in Europe was the transfer of the provinces of Alsace-Lorraine to France. There were some other changes also but I shall not trouble you with them. Now you have seen that these changes have resulted in the creation of many new states, most of these being quite small ones. Eastern Europe now resembles the Balkans, and therefore it is often said that the Peace treaties have 'balkanised' Europe. There are many more frontiers now and there is frequent trouble between these petty States. It is amazing how they hate each other, especially in the Danube valley. A great deal of the responsibility for this lies on the Allies who divided up Europe all wrong and thus created many new problems. Many national minorities are under foreign governments which oppress them. Poland has got a large territory which is really part of Ukraine, and the poor Ukrainians in this area have been subjected to all manner of atrocities in an attempt to 'polonise' them forcibly. Jugo-Slavia and Rumania and Italy have all got foreign minorities in this way and they ill treat them. Austria and Hungary on the other hand are cut down to the bone and most of their own people have been taken away from them. All these areas under foreign control naturally give rise to national movements and continuous friction.

Look at the map again. You will see that Russia is completely cut off from western Europe by a string of States—Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Rumania. As I have told you, most of these States were not formed by the Versailles treaties, but were the result of the Soviet revolution. None-the-less they were welcomed by the Allies, as they formed a line separating

Russia from non-Bolshevik Europe. They were a *cordon sanitaire* (by which infectious diseases are isolated) which would help in keeping off the Bolshevik infection! All these Baltic States are non-Bolshevik; otherwise they would of course join the Soviet Federation.

In western Asia parts of the old Turkish Empire tempted the Western Powers. During the war the British had encouraged an Arab revolt against Turkey by promising to create a united Arab kingdom extending over Arabia, Palestine and Syria. While this promise was being made to the Arabs, the British were making a secret treaty with France partitioning these very territories. It was not a very creditable thing to do and the present British Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, called it a tale of 'crude duplicity'. But this was ten years ago when he was not a minister and so could afford, sometimes, to tell the truth.

There was almost a strange sequel still when the British government played with the idea of breaking not only its promise to the Arabs but also its secret treaty with France. Before them rose the dream of a great middle Eastern Empire, stretching from India to Egypt, an enormous block joining their Indian Empire to their vast African possessions. It was a tempting and a tremendous dream. And yet it did not seem then very difficult to realise. At that time in 1919 British troops held all this vast area—Persia, Iraq, Palestine, parts of Arabia, Egypt. They were trying to keep out the French from Syria. The city of Constantinople itself was in British possession. The dream vanished as the years 1920 and 1921 and 1922 unfolded what they had in store. The Soviet background and Kemal Pasha in the foreground put an end to these ambitious schemes of British ministers.

But still Britain held on to a great deal in western Asia—Iraq and Palestine—and tried to influence the course of events in Arabia by bribery and other means. Syria fell to the lot of the French. Of the new

nationalism of the Arab countries and their struggle for freedom, I must tell you some other time.

We must go back to the treaty of Versailles. This treaty laid down that Germany was the guilty party in causing the war and the Germans were thus forced to admit their own war guilt by signing the treaty. Such forcible admissions have little value; they create bitterness, as they did in this case.

Germany was also called upon to disarm. She could keep only a small army, more or less for police purposes, and had to surrender her fleet to the Allies. As the German fleet was being taken for this surrender, its officers and men decided, on their own responsibility, to sink it rather than hand it over to the British. And so, in June, 1919, at Scapa Flow, within sight of the British, who were making ready to take over charge, the whole German fleet was scuttled and sunk by its own crew.

Further, Germany was to pay a war indemnity and to make good the losses and damage caused to the Allies by the War. This was called 'Reparations' and the word has since hung like a shadow over Europe. No definite sum was fixed by the Treaty but provision was made for the fixing of this sum. This undertaking to make good the war losses of the Allies was a stupendous affair. Germany was a conquered and a ruined country at the time faced with vast problems to make both ends meet for her domestic purposes. In addition to this to have to shoulder the burden of the Allies was an impossible task, incapable of fulfilment. But the Allies were full of hate and the spirit of revenge and wanted not only their "pound of flesh" but almost the last drop of blood from Germany's prostrate body. In England Lloyd George had won an election on the cry of 'Hang the Kaiser'. In France feelings were even bitterer.

The whole purpose of all these clauses of the treaty was to tie up Germany in every possible way, to disable her, and to prevent her from becoming strong again. She was to remain for generations the economic serf of

the Allies, paying vast sums as annual tribute. The obvious lesson of history that it was impossible to tie up a great people for long in this way did not strike the wise super-statesmen, who laid the foundations of this peace of vengeance at Versailles. They are repenting for it now.

Lastly, I must tell you of President Wilson's child, the League of Nations, which the Treaty of Versailles presented to the world. This was to be a league of free and self-governing states, and its purpose was "to prevent future wars by establishing relations on the basis of justice and honour and to promote co-operation, material and intellectual, between the nations of the world." A very praiseworthy purpose! Each member-state of the League undertook never to go to war with a fellow state until all possibilities of a peaceful settlement had been exhausted, and then only after an interval of nine months. In case a member-state broke this pledge, the other states were pledged to discontinue financial and economic relations with that state. All this sounds very fine on paper; in practice it has turned out to be very different. It is worth nothing, however, that even in theory the League did not try to end war; it sought to put difficulties in its way, so that the passage of time, and efforts at conciliation might soothe away war passions. Nor did it try to remove the causes of war.

The League was to consist of an Assembly, where all its member states would be represented, and a Council in which the great Powers were to have permanent representatives and some additional ones were to be elected by the Assembly. There was to be a secretariat with its headquarters, as you know, at Geneva. There were also other departments of activity: an International Labour Office dealing with labour matters; a Permanent Court of International Justice at the Hague; and a Committee for Intellectual co-operation. The League did not begin with all these activities. Some of them were added subsequently.

The original constitution of the League was

contained in the Treaty of Versailles. This is called the "Covenant of the League of Nations". In this covenant it was also laid down that armaments should be reduced by all states to the lowest point consistent with national safety. German disarmament (which, of course was compulsory) was held to be the first step in this direction, the other countries were to follow. It was further stated that in case of aggression by any state steps should be taken against it. But it was not stated what constituted aggression. When two people or two nations fight each blames the other and calls it the aggressor.

The League could only decide important matters unanimously. Thus if even one member state voted against a proposition, it fell through. This meant that there was to be no coercion by a majority vote. It further meant that national sovereignties remained as independent and almost as irresponsible as before; the League did not become a kind of super-state over them. This provision weakened the League greatly and made it practically an advisory body.

Any independent state could join the League, but four countries were definitely excluded: Germany, Austria and Turkey—the defeated Powers—and Russia, the Bolshevik Power. It was laid down however that they might come in later under certain conditions. India, curiously enough, became an original member of the League, in flat contradiction of the provision that only self-governing states could be members. Of course by 'India' was meant the British government in India and by this clever dodge the British government managed to get an extra representative. On the other hand, America, which was in a sense a parent of the League, refused to join it. The Americans got rather fed up with President Wilson's activities and with European intrigues and complications, and decided to keep away.

Many people looked up to the League with enthusiasm and in the hope that it would end, or at any rate greatly lessen, the discords of our present-day world

and bring an era of peace and plenty. League of Nations societies were founded in many countries to popularise the League and to spread, it was said, the habit of looking at things internationally. On the other hand, many other people described the League as a pious fraud, meant to further the designs of the great Powers. We have now had some actual experience of it and perhaps it is easier to judge of its utility. The League started functioning on New Year's Day 1920 and so it has existed thirteen and a quarter years (I am writing this in April, 1933). This is certainly not a long period in the history of an international organisation, and yet it has been long enough to discredit the League in many ways. Undoubtedly it has done good work in various byways of modern life; and the mere fact that it has brought nations, or rather their governments, together to discuss international problems has been an advance on old methods. But it seems to have failed completely in achieving its real object, the preservation of peace or even the lessening of the chances of war.

Whatever may have been the original intention of President Wilson about it, there can be no doubt that the League has been a tool in the hands of the great Powers, and especially of England and France. Its very basic function is the maintenance of the *status quo*, that is the existing order. It talks of justice and honour between nations but it does not enquire whether the existing relationships are based on justice and honour. It proclaims that it does not interfere in the 'domestic matters' of nations. The dependencies of an imperialist Power are domestic matters for it. So that, so far as the League is concerned it looks forward to a perpetual dominance by these Powers over their empires. In addition to this, fresh territories, taken from Germany and Turkey, were awarded to the Allied Powers under the name of 'mandates'. This word is typical of the League of Nations as it signifies the continuation of the old imperialist exploitation under a pleasant name. These mandates were supposed to be awarded in

accordance with the wishes of the people of the mandated territory. Many of these unhappy peoples even rebelled against them and carried on a bloody fight for long periods till they were bombed and shelled into submission. Such was the method of finding out the wishes of the people concerned!

Fine words and phrases were used. The imperialist Powers were 'trustees' for the inhabitants of the mandated territories and the League was to see that the conditions of the trust were fulfilled. As a matter of fact this made matters worse. The Powers did just what they liked but they put on a more sanctimonious garb and thus lulled the consciences of the unwary. When some little state offended in any way the League put on a stern aspect and threatened it with its displeasure. When a great Power offended the League looked away as far as possible or tried to minimise the offence.

Thus the great Powers dominated the League and they used it whenever it served their purpose to do so, and ignored it when this was found more convenient. Perhaps the fault was not the League's; it lay with the system itself which the League, by its very nature, had to put up with. The very essence of imperialism was bitter rivalry and competition between the different Powers, each of them bent on exploiting as much of the world as possible. If the members of a society are continually trying to pick each other's pockets and sharpening their knives in order to cut each other's throats, it is not likely that there will be much co-operation between them, or that the society will make remarkable progress. It is not surprising therefore that in spite of an imposing array of sponsors and god-parents, the League languished.

In the course of the treaty discussions at Versailles, it was proposed on behalf of the Japanese government that a clause recognising racial equality be introduced into the treaty. This was not accepted. Japan was, however, consoled by the gift of Kianchan in China. The "Big Three" were generous at the expense of a weak

and humble ally like China. Because of this China did not sign the treaty.

Such was the Treaty of Versailles, which put an end to 'the war which was to end war'. The history of the last fourteen years has been a lurid commentary on this Treaty. Philip Snowden, an English politician of note, now Viscount Snowden, and till recently a cabinet minister in England, made the following comment on the Treaty:

"The Treaty should satisfy brigands, imperialists and militarists. It is the death-blow to the hopes of those who expected the end of the war to bring peace. It is not a peace treaty, but a declaration of another war. It is the betrayal of democracy and of the fallen in the war. The Treaty exposes the true aims of the Allies."

Indeed, the Allies in their hatred and pride and greed over-reached themselves. They are already sorry enough for it and there is talk of a revision of the Treaty. But perhaps it is too late now.

What a long letter this has become!

THE POST-WAR WORLD

April 26, 1933

At last we have reached the last stage of our long wandering; we are on the threshold of to-day. We have to consider the post-war world, the world after the Great War. We are now in our own times, indeed your times! It is the last stage and a very short one as time goes, but still a difficult one. It is just fourteen and a half years since the war ended, and what is this tiny fraction of time to the long periods of history we have considered? But we are in the very thick of it and it is difficult to form right opinions of events at such close range. We cannot get the right perspective, nor the calm detachment which history demands. We are too excited about many happenings, and little things may seem big to us, and some of the really big things not fully appreciated. We may lose ourselves in a multitude of trees and miss seeing the wood.

And then again there is the difficulty of knowing how to measure the importance of events. What yardstick should we use for this purpose? It is obvious enough that much will depend on the way we look at things. From one point of view an event may seem important to us, from another it may lose all importance and seem trivial. I am afraid I have to some extent evaded this question in the letters I have written to you; I have not answered it fairly and squarely. But still my general outlook has coloured all that I have written. Another person writing about the same periods and events might write something very different.

Now I am not going into the question here of what our outlook on history should be. My own on the

subject has changed greatly in recent years. And just as I have changed my views on this and other matters, so have many others. For the war gave a terrible shaking to everything and everybody. It upset the old world completely, and ever since then our poor old world is trying painfully to stand up again, without much success. It shook the whole system of ideas on which we had grown up and made us begin to doubt the very basis of modern society and civilization. We saw the terrible waste of young lives, the lying, violence, brutality, destruction, and wondered if this was the end of civilization. The Soviet rose in Russia, a new thing, a new social order, and a challenge to the old. Other ideas also floated in the air. It was a period of disintegration, of the breaking up of old beliefs and customs; an age of doubt and questioning which always come in a period of transition and rapid change.

All this makes it a little difficult for us to consider the post-war days as history. But while we may discuss and question various beliefs and ideas, and not accept any of them simply because it is said to be old, we cannot make this the excuse for just playing with ideas and not taking the trouble to think our hardest, so that we may know what to do. Such periods of transition in the world's history especially call for activity of mind and body. They are the times when the dull routine of life is livened up and adventure beckons, and we can all take our part in the building up of the new order. And in such times the youth have always played a dominating part, for they can adapt themselves to changing ideas and conditions far more easily than those who have grown old and hardened and fixed in the ancient beliefs.

Perhaps it will be as well to examine this post-war period in some detail. But in this letter I should like you to make a general survey of it. You will remember our survey of the nineteenth century after the fall of Napoleon. Inevitably one thinks of the Peace of Vienna of 1815 and its consequences, and compares it

with the Peace of Versailles of 1919 and its consequences. The Peace of Vienna was not a happy one; it laid the seeds of future wars in Europe. Not learning by experience, our statesmen made the Versailles peace a far worse one, as we saw in the last letter. Over the post-war years has lain heavily the dark shadow of this so-called peace.

What are the outstanding events then of these past fourteen years? First in importance, I think, and most striking of all has been the rise and consolidation of the Soviet Union, the U. S. S. R. or the Union of Socialist and Soviet Republics, as it is called. I have told you already something of the enormous difficulties which Soviet Russia had to face in its fight for existence. That it won in spite of them is one of the wonders of this century. The Soviet system spread all over the Asiatic parts of the former Tsarist Empire, in Siberia right up to the Pacific, and in Central Asia to within hail of the Indian frontier. Separate Soviet republics were formed but they federated together into one Union, and this is the U. S. S. R. now. This Union covers an enormous area in Europe and Asia, which is about one-sixth of the total land area of the world. The area is very big but bigness by itself does not mean much, and Russia, and much more so Siberia and Central Asia, were very backward. The second wonder that the Soviets performed was to transform great parts of this area out of all recognitions by prodigious schemes of planning. There is no instance in recorded history of such rapid advance of a people. Even the most backward areas in Central Asia have gone ahead with a rush which we in India might well envy. The most notable advances have been in education and in industry. By a vast *Five Years' Plan*, which period has recently ended, the industrialisation of Russia has been pushed on at a feverish pace and enormous factories have been put up. All this has meant a very great strain on the people who have had to do without comforts and even necessities so that the greater part of their earnings might

go in this building up of the first socialist country. The burden has fallen especially on the peasantry and, as I write, a very critical year is ahead of them.

The contrast between this progressive go-ahead Soviet country and western Europe, with its ever increasing troubles, is very marked. In spite of all its difficulties western Europe is still far richer than Russia. In the long days of its prosperity, it accumulated a great deal of fat on which it can live for some time. But the burden of debt which each country carries, the problem of Reparations, which under the Versailles Treaty Germany was to pay, and the continuous rivalry and conflicts of the Powers, great and small, have brought poor Europe to a terrible pass. Interminable conferences meet to find some way out of the difficulty and no way is found, and daily the situation worsens. To compare Soviet Russia with western Europe to-day is to compare a youth, carrying a heavy burden but full of life and vigour, with an aged person with little hope or energy left and going forward, not without pride, but inevitably, to the end of his present state.

The United States of America seemed, after the war, to have escaped this European contagion. For ten years they prospered exceedingly. They had in war-time pushed out England from being the boss of the money-lending business. America was now the money-lender to the world and all the world was her debtor. In an economic sense she dominated the whole world, and she might have lived comfortably on the world's tribute, as, to some extent, England had done previously. But there were two difficulties. The debtor countries were in a bad way and could not pay their debts in cash; indeed, even if they had been in a good way they could not have paid these vast sums in cash. The only way they could try to pay them was to manufacture goods and send them to America. But America did not like the idea of foreign goods coming to her, and huge tariff walls were put up which stopped most of these goods from entering. How then were the poor debtor

countries to pay? A brilliant way was found. America would lend them more money to pay the interest due to her! This was an extraordinary way of getting a debt paid, for it meant the creditor paying more and more and the debt going up. It became clear enough that most of the debtor countries would never be able to shake off the debt, and then suddenly America stopped lending, and immediately the whole paper structure came down with a crash. And another very strange thing happened. America, prosperous America, filled to the brim with gold, became suddenly a land of vast numbers of unemployed workers, and the wheels of industry stopped running, and destitution spread.

If rich America was so hard hit, it can be imagined what the state of Europe was. Each country tried to keep out foreign goods by heavy tariff rates and other devices and buy home-made goods propaganda. Each country wanted to sell and not to buy, or to buy as little as possible. This kind of thing cannot go on for long without killing international trade, for trade and commerce depend on exchange. This policy is called economic nationalism. It spread to all countries and so did other forms of aggressive nationalism. As trade and industry languished the difficulties of each country grew and the great imperialist Powers tried to make both ends meet by greater imperialist exploitation abroad and by cutting down the wages of workers at home. Rival imperialisms in their desire and attempts to exploit various parts of the world came more and more into conflict. While the League of Nations talked piously of disarmament and did nothing, the spectre of war seemed ever to draw nearer. Again the Powers started grouping themselves for the conflict that seemed inevitable.

We are still, as I write, in the midst of the Great Depression which has laid world capitalism low. Frantic remedies are being sought to get back to normal conditions. I do not know if any remedy will be found. It may be that capitalism will just succeed in getting

over its present acute illness, but it is exceedingly doubtful if it will ever be healthy again. The communist analysis seems to be justifying itself, and capitalism is expiring on account of its own inherent contradictions, and if this crisis does not kill it, a subsequent one will. It is strange that the capitalist countries cannot even unite to crush the Soviet Union, much as they all hate it.

So we seem to be nearing the end of the great period during which capitalist civilization held sway in western Europe and America and dominated the rest of the world. For the first ten years after the war it appeared that perhaps capitalism might recover and steady itself for another considerable period. But the last three years or so have made this very doubtful. Not only is the rivalry between capitalist states growing to dangerous dimensions, but, at the same time, within each state the conflict between classes, between the workers and the capitalist owning class, which controls the government, is becoming acute. Thus there is danger both of national wars between the great Powers and Civil War within each country. As these conditions worsen, a last desperate attempt is made by the owning classes to crush the rising workers. This takes the form of Fascism. Fascism appears where the conflict between the classes has become acute and the owning class is in danger of losing its privileged position.

Fascism began in Italy soon after the war. The workers were getting out of hand there when the Fascists under the leadership of Mussolini, gained control and they have been in power ever since. Fascism means naked dictatorship. It despises openly democratic forms. Fascist methods have spread to a greater or lesser extent to many countries of Europe, and dictatorship is quite a common phenomenon there. The latest country to go Fascist is Germany where the young Republic, proclaimed in 1918, has been ended, and the most barbarous methods adopted to kill the workers' movement.

So in Europe Fascism faces communism, and at the same time the capitalist powers glare at each other and prepare to fight each other. And capitalism offers further the most remarkable sight of abundance and poverty side by side; food rotting away and even being thrown away and destroyed, and people starving.

One ancient country in Europe—Spain—has during the last few years turned herself into a republic and driven out her Hapsburg-Bourbon ruler. So there is one king the less in Europe and the world.

I have told you of three of the outstanding events of the past fourteen years: the Soviet Union; the economic world domination of America and her present crisis; and the European tangle. The fourth outstanding event of this period is the full awakening of Eastern countries and their aggressive attempts to gain freedom. The east definitely enters world politics. These eastern nations might be considered in two classes: those that are considered independent, and those that are colonial countries controlled by some imperialist Power. In all these countries of Asia and North Africa nationalism has grown strong, and the desire for freedom insistent and aggressive. In all there have been powerful movements, and in some places even rebellions, against western imperialism. Many of these countries have received direct help and, what was of far greater importance, moral backing at a critical stage of their struggle from the Soviet Union.

The most remarkable rebirth of a nation that seemed to be down and out is that of Turkey, and for that the credit must go in a large measure to Mustafa Kemal Pasha, the gallant leader who refused to submit even when all seemed against him. Not only did he win freedom for his country but he has modernised it and changed it out of all recognition. He has put an end to the Sultanate and the Caliphate, and *purdah* for women and a host of other old customs. The moral and actual support of the Soviet was of great help to him. The Soviet also was of help to Persia in her

efforts to get rid of British influence. A strong man, Riza Khan, rose there also, and he is the ruler now. Afghanistan also succeeded during this period in establishing its complete independence.

The Arab countries, with the exception of Arabia itself, are still under foreign control. The demand of the Arabs for unity has not been met. The greater part of Arabia has become independent under Sultan Ibn Saud. Iraq is independent on paper, but in effect is within the British sphere of influence and control. The little states of Palestine and Trans-Jordan are British mandates, and Syria a French mandate. There was an extraordinarily gallant rebellion in Syria against the French and it partly succeeded. Egypt also had insurrections and a long drawn out struggle against the British. That struggle continues still, though Egypt is called independent and a British puppet Sultan reigns there. To the far west of north Africa there was also a gallant struggle for freedom in Morocco under the leadership of Abdul Karim. He succeeded in driving the Spanish, but then the full force of the French crushed him.

All these struggles for freedom in Asia and Africa show how the new spirit was abroad and affecting the minds of men and women in distant countries of the East simultaneously. Two countries stand out because they have a world significance. They are China and India. Any radical change in either of these countries affects the whole great power system of the world; it is bound to produce enormous consequences in world politics. The struggles in China and India are thus far more than domestic struggles of the peoples concerned. The success of China means the emergence of a mighty state which makes a difference to the present balance of power, as it is called, and which automatically puts an end to the exploitation of China by the imperialist Powers. The success of India also means the appearance at least potentially of a great state, and immediately it means the end of the British empire.

China has had many ups and downs during the last ten years. An alliance of the Kuo-Ming-Tang and the Chinese communists broke up and ever since China has been a prey to the *Tuchuns* and similar brigand chiefs who are often helped by foreign interests who want disorder in China to continue. For the last two years the Japanese have actually invaded China and taken possession of several provinces. This informal war is still going on. Meanwhile large areas in the interior of China have turned communist and there is a Soviet government of a kind there.

In India the last fourteen years have been very full ones and have seen an aggressive and yet a peaceful nationalism. Soon after the war, when expectations of great reforms ran high, we had martial law in the Punjab and the horrible massacre of Jallianwala Bagh. Anger at this and Muslim resentment at the treatment of Turkey and the Caliphate led to the non-cooperation movement of 1920 to 1922 under Bapu's leadership. Indeed from 1920 onwards Bapu has been the unquestioned leader of Indian nationalism. This has been the Gandhi age in India, and his methods of peaceful revolt by their novelty and efficacy have attracted the world's attention. After a spell of quieter activities and preparation, the fight for freedom began again in 1930, with the definite adoption by the Congress of the goal of independence. Since then we have had, off and on, civil disobedience and prisons full and the many other things that you know. Meanwhile the British policy has been petty reforms to win over some people if they can, and a crushing of the nationalist movement. That policy holds still and naturally the fight continues.

Burma had a great revolt of the starving peasantry two years ago. It was suppressed with great cruelty. In Java and the Dutch Indies there was also a revolt. In Siam I see in the papers that there has been a ferment and some change has taken place limiting the king's powers. In French Indo-China nationalism is also on the move.

So all over the East nationalism struggles to find expression and in some places it is mixed with a little communism. There is little in common between the two except the common hatred of imperialism. Soviet Russia's wise and generous policy towards all eastern countries, within her Union as well as outside, has found many friends for her even in non-communist countries.

The advance of India towards freedom and independence means necessarily, as we have seen, the fading away of the British Empire. Indeed, quite apart from the Indian struggle, the British Empire is definitely fading away; like the cheshire cat in *Alice in Wonderland* it is vanishing away but the smile remains, and it is a brave smile. It is a little pathetic to see the decline of a great nation. England has been great in her day but the very sources of her old strength are being cut off from her one by one. She lives on her hoarded wealth, and there is enough of this to carry on for some time, and Englishmen are not lacking in courage in facing the many difficulties that confront them. A brave attempt is made to keep up appearances by imperial England; like an old lady, once beautiful but now long past her prime, she tries to appear young with the help of paint and powder. But behind this imperial lady in her decline there is another England, of workers and many intellectuals who side with them, and the future must belong to them.

One other outstanding feature of recent years has been the emancipation of women from the many bonds, legal, social and customary, that held them. The war gave a great push to this in the west. And even in the east, from Turkey to India and China, woman is up and doing and taking a brave part in national and social activities.

Such are the times we live in. Every day bring news of change or important happening, of the friction between nations, of the duel between the pound and the dollar, of capitalist anger at the Soviet and of Soviet retaliation, of growing poverty and destitution and class

conflicts, and over all lies the ever lengthening shadow of war.

It is a stirring period of history and it is good to be alive and to take one's share in it, even though the share may consist of solitude in the Dehra Dun Jail!

IRELAND'S FIGHT FOR A REPUBLIC

April 28, 1933

We shall now consider the important events of recent years in some greater detail. I shall begin with Ireland. From the point of view of world history and world forces this little country of the far west of Europe has no great importance at present. But it is a brave and irrepressible country, and not all the might of the British Empire has been able to crush its spirit or cow it into submission. It is now one of the factors helping in the breaking up of the British Empire.

In my last letter about Ireland I told you of the Home Rule Bill that was passed by the British parliament just before the Great War. This was resented by the Protestant leaders of Ulster and by the Conservative Party in England, and a regular rebellion was organised against it. Thereupon the southern Irish also organised their 'National Volunteers' to fight against Ulster if necessary. Civil War in Ireland seemed inevitable. Just then came the World War, and all attention was diverted to the battlefields of Belgium and northern France. The Irish leaders in Parliament offered their help in the war, but the country was apathetic and by no means keen. Meanwhile the Ulster 'rebels' were given high office in the British government, and this made the Irish people still more dissatisfied.

Discontent grew in Ireland and a feeling that they must not be sacrificed in England's war. When a proposal was made that conscription be introduced in Ireland, as in England, and all the able-bodied young men be forced to join the army, there was an angry flare up of protest all over the country. Ireland

prepared to resist with force, if necessary.

During Easter week in 1916 there was a rising in Dublin and an Irish Republic was proclaimed. After a few days of fighting this was crushed by the British and some of the bravest and finest young men of Ireland were shot down afterwards under martial law for their part in the brief rebellion. This rising—it is known as the 'Easter Rising'—was hardly a serious attempt to challenge the British. It was more of a brave gesture to demonstrate to the world that Ireland still dreamt of a republic and refused to submit willingly to British domination. The gallant young men behind the rising deliberately sacrificed themselves to make this gesture to the world, well knowing that they would fail in the present, but hoping that their sacrifice would bear fruit later and bring freedom nearer.

About the time of this rising an Irishman was also caught by the British in an attempt to bring arms to Ireland from Germany. This man was Sir Roger Casement who had been for long in the British consular service. Casement was tried in London and sentenced to death; from his prisoner's dock in court he read out a statement which was extraordinary moving and eloquent, and which laid bare the passionate patriotism of the Irish soul.

The Rising had failed but in its very failure it triumphed. The repression of the British government that followed it and especially the shooting of the group of young leaders created a powerful impression on the Irish people. Ireland seemed to be quiet on the surface but anger blazed below, and soon this found its outlet in Sinn Fein. Sinn Fein ideas spread with great rapidity. In my last letter on Ireland I told you of this Sinn Fein. It had met with little success to begin with; now it spread like a forest fire.

After the Great War was over there were elections all over the British Isles for the parliament in London. In Ireland the Sinn Feiners captured the great majority of seats, displacing the old nationalists who were for

some co-operation with the British. But Sinn Fein did not get elected to the British parliament in order to attend it. Their policy was entirely different; they believed in non-cooperation and boycott. So these elected Sinn Feiners stayed away from the London Parliament and instead, set up their own republican assembly in Dublin in 1919. They proclaimed the Irish Republic and called their assembly the 'Dail Eireann'. It was supposed to be for the whole of Ireland, including Ulster, but the Ulsterites naturally kept away. They had no love for Catholic Ireland. The Dail Eireann elected De Valera as its president and Griffiths as the Vice-president. Both of these heads of the new republic happened to be in British jails at the time.

Then began one of the most extraordinary of struggles, a fight that was unique and quite unlike any of the numerous former fights between Ireland and England. A mere handful of young men and women, with the sympathy of their people with them, fought against fantastic odds; a great and organised empire was against them. The Sinn Fein struggle was a kind of non-cooperation with violence thrown in. They preached boycotts of English institutions and set up their own wherever possible, like arbitration courts to take the place of the ordinary law courts. In the country side a guerilla warfare was carried on against the police outposts. The Sinn Fein prisoners gave a lot of trouble to the British government by hunger-striking in gaols. The most famous hunger strike, which thrilled Ireland, was that of Terence MacSwiney, the Lord Mayor of Cork. When put in gaol he declared that he would come out alive or dead and gave up taking food. After he had fasted for seventy-five days his dead body was carried out of the gaol.

Michael Collins was one of the more prominent organisers of the Sinn Fein rebellion. The British government in Ireland was largely paralysed by the Sinn Fein tactics, and in the country districts it hardly existed. Gradually violence grew on both sides and there were

frequent reprisals. A special British force was enrolled to serve in Ireland; it was highly paid and contained the more desperate and violent elements out of those recently discharged from the war armies. This force came to be known as the 'Black and Tans' from the colours of their uniforms. These Black and Tans started a campaign of cold-blooded murder, often shooting people in their beds, in the hope that they would thus terrorise the Sinn Feiners into submission. But the Sinn Feiners refused to submit and carried on their guerilla warfare. Thereupon the Black and Tans indulged in terrible reprisals burning down whole villages and large parts of towns. Ireland became one huge field of conflict where both parties vied with each other in violence and destruction; behind one of the parties was the organised strength of an empire, behind the other was the iron resolve of a handful of men. For two years this Anglo-Irish War lasted, from 1919 to October, 1921.

Meanwhile, in 1920, the British parliament hurriedly passed a new Home Rule Bill. The old act, passed just before the Great War, which nearly brought on rebellion in Ulster, was quietly dropped. The new bill divided up Ireland into two parts: Ulster or North Ireland, and the rest of the country, and there were to be two separate parliaments. Ireland is a small country and by dividing it up the two parts became tiny areas in a small island. The new parliament was set up in Ulster for the north, but in the south, in the rest of Ireland, nobody paid any attention to the Home Rule Act. They were all busy with the Sinn Fein rebellion.

In October, 1921, Lloyd George, the British Minister, appealed to the Sinn Fein leaders for a truce to talk over the possibility of a settlement, and this was agreed to. Britain could no doubt have ultimately crushed Sinn Fein in Ireland with her vast resources and by converting the whole country into a desert, but her policy in Ireland was making her very unpopular in America and elsewhere. Money had poured in to Ireland from the

Irish in America, and even from the British dominions, for carrying on the struggle. At the same time the Sinn Feiners were also tired out; the strain on them had been very great.

The English and Irish representatives met in London, and after two months of discussion and argument a provisional settlement was signed in December, 1921. This did not recognize the Irish Republic, but it gave Ireland more freedom, except for one or two matter, than any dominion had so far possessed. Even so the Irish representatives were not willing to accept this, and only agreed when the threat of immediate and frightful war was held out to them by England.

In Ireland there was a tremendous tussle over this treaty; some were for it, others violently against. The Sinn Fein party was split up in two over this question. The Dail Eireann at length accepted the treaty and the Irish Free State, called officially in Ireland the 'Saorstat Eireann', came into existence. But it brought in its train Civil War between the old comrades of the Sinn Fein ranks. De Valera, the president of the Dail Eireann, was opposed to the treaty with England and so were many others; Griffiths and Michael Collins and others were in favour of it. For many months Civil War raged in the country and those in favour of the treaty and the Free State were helped by British forces to put down the others. Michael Collins was shot down by the republicans, and in the same way many a republican leader was shot down by the Free State people. The gaols were full of republicans. All this Civil War and mutual hatred was a terribly tragic development of Ireland's brave struggle for freedom. English policy had won, where her arms had been checked, and Irishman was fighting Irishman, and England was to some extent quietly helping one party and generally looking on, well content with the new development.

The Civil War gradually died away but the republicans would not accept the Free State. Even those republicans who had been elected to the Dail (the

parliament of the Free State) refused to attend as they objected to taking the oath of allegiance as this mentioned the king. So De Valera and his party kept away from the Dail and the other Free State party headed by Cosgrave, the president of the Free State, tried to crush the republicans in many ways.

The formation of the Irish Free State led to some far-reaching consequences in Britain's imperial politics. The Irish treaty had given to Ireland a greater measure of independence than was possessed at the time, in law, by the other dominions. As soon as Ireland got this, the other dominions automatically took it also, and the idea of dominion status underwent a change. Further changes in the direction of greater independence of the dominions followed some Imperial conferences which were held between England and the dominions. Ireland, with her strong republican movement, was always pulling towards complete independence. So also was South Africa with her Boer majority. In this way the position of the dominions went on changing and improving till they came to be considered as sister nations with England in the British Commonwealth of Nations. This sounds fine, and no doubt it does represent a progressive growth towards an equal political status. But the equality is more in theory than in fact. Economically the dominions are tied to Britain and British capital, and there are many ways of bringing economic pressure to bear on them. At the same time as the dominions grow their economic interests tend to conflict with those of England. Thus the empire gradually gets weaker. It was because of the imminent danger of the cracking up of the empire that England agreed to the loosening of the bonds and admitting political equality with the dominions. By wisely going thus far in time she saved much. But not for long. The forces that separate the dominions from England continue to work; they are in the main economic forces. And these forces continually tend to weaken the empire. It was because of this, as well as the undoubted decline of England, that I wrote

to you of the fading away of the British empire. If it is difficult for the dominions to remain tied to England for long, with all their common traditions and culture and racial unity, how much more difficult must it be for India to remain tied to her. For India's economic interests come into direct conflict with British interests and one of them must bow to the other. Thus a free India is most unlikely to accept this connection with its corollary of subordinating her economic policy to that of Britain.

The British Commonwealth, meaning thereby the free dominions and not poor, dependent India, means thus politically free units. But all these units are under the economic empire of Britain still. The Irish treaty meant the continuation of this exploitation of Ireland to some extent by British capital, and this was the real trouble behind the agitation for a republic. De Valera and the republicans represented the poorer farmers, the lower middle class people and the poor intellectuals; Cosgrave and the Free State people represented the richer middle class and the richer farmers, and both these classes were interested in the British trade, and British capital was interested in them.

After some time De Valera decided to change his tactics. He and his party went into the Dail Eireann and took the oath of allegiance, announcing at the same time that they did so for form's sake, and that they would do away with the oath as soon as they had the majority. At the next election, early in 1932, De Valera did get his majority in the Free State parliament and immediately he began carrying out his programme. The fight for the republic was still to go on, but the method of fighting was different. De Valera proposed to abolish the oath of allegiance and also informed the English government that he would not pay the land annuities any more to them. I think I wrote to you what these annuities were. When the land in Ireland was taken from the big landlords, they were compensated handsomely for it, and then the money for this

was realised year after year from the farmers who had taken the land. This process had gone on for more than a generation, but still it continued. De Valera said that he would refuse to pay any more.

Immediately there was an outcry in England and a conflict with the British government. They protested first of all that it was a breach of the Irish treaty of 1921 for De Valera to abolish the oath of allegiance. De Valera said that if Ireland and England were sister nations, as the dominions were proclaimed to be, and each was free to change its constitutions, then obviously Ireland could change or remove the oath from the constitution. No question of the treaty of 1921 arose now. If Ireland did not have that right then she was, to that extent, dependent on England.

Secondly the British government protested even more loudly about the stoppage of the annuities and said that this was a gross breach of a contract and obligation. De Valera denied this and there was a legal argument about it which need not trouble us. When there is such a legal dispute the obvious thing is to have impartial arbitration. Both parties said they would agree to arbitration but a curious difficulty arose. The British government said that the arbitration tribunals must consist of people from the empire, De Valera refused to agree to any such limitation. He suggested the Permanent Court of Justice at the Hague or any other tribunal to which foreigners could be appointed; he said plainly enough that he did not trust the empire people. To this the British government would not agree. It seems rather silly that two governments should break on such a minor issue as the constitution of a tribunal, but behind it there was much more than meets the eye. There was the Irish determination to go forward to the republic, and there was the British determination to resist this.

When the time for the payment of the annuities came and they were not paid, England started a new war against Ireland. This was an economic war. Heavy

tariff duties were put on Irish goods coming to England so as to ruin the Irish farmer, whose products came to England, and thus force the Irish government to come to terms. As usual with her, England began using her bludgeon in order to compel the other party, but such methods are not so useful now as they were. The Irish government retaliated by putting duties on British goods going to Ireland. For the last year this economic war has continued and has caused great loss to farmers and industries on both sides. But outraged nationalism and prestige stand in the way of either party giving in.

There was a fresh election in Ireland a few months ago, early in 1933, and, much to the disgust of the British government. De Valera was even more successful than before and came back with a bigger majority. So it was obvious that the British policy of economic coercion had not succeeded. The curious part of it is that while the British government proclaim the wickedness of the Irish in not paying their debts, they themselves do not want to pay their own debts to America.

So De Valera is head of the Irish government now and he is taking his country, step by step, to the republic. The oath of allegiance has already gone; the payment of the annuities has been finally stopped; the old governor-general has also gone, and De Valera has appointed a member of his party to this office, which has lost all its importance now. The fight for a republic goes on, but the methods are now different; and the centuries-old Anglo-Irish struggle still goes on, and it takes the shape of an economic war to-day.

Ireland may develop into a republic soon. But there is one great obstacle in the way. De Valera and his party want, above all, a unified Ireland, one republic, one central government for the whole island, including Ulster. Ireland is too small to be split up into two bits. How to get Ulster to join the rest of Ireland is the great problem before De Valera. It cannot be done by force. An attempt to do so by the British government

in 1914 nearly ended in a rebellion, and the State certainly cannot force Ulster, nor does it dream of doing so. De Valera hopes that he will be able to win the goodwill of Ulster and thus bring about union. This hope seems to err very much on the side of optimism, for Protestant Ulster's bitter distrust of Catholic Ireland still continues. It may be that the union will come when the working class become prominent in the governments of both parts of Ireland. They will have no religious animosities.

A NEW TURKEY RISES FROM THE ASHES

May 7, 1933

I have not written to you for many days. Other matters have distracted me and interfered with the even tenor of my life here. Bapu is to fast again, a long, terrible fast, and my mind wanders to Yervada Prison, and I try to probe into the darkness of the future. But that helps me little here in Dehra Gaol, and so I must come back to my task and trace the more visible outlines of past events for you to read.

I told you in my last letter of Ireland's brave fight for a republic. Between Ireland and Turkey there is no particular connection, but I have the new Turkey in mind to-day and therefore I propose to write to you about her. In common with Ireland, she put up an amazing resistance against great odds. We have already seen three empires disappear as a result of the World War—Russia, Austria and Germany. In Turkey we see the end of a fourth great empire, the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman and his successors had founded and built up this empire six hundred years ago; their dynasty was thus far older than the Romanoffs of Russia or the Hohenzollerns of Prussia and Germany. They were the contemporaries of the early Hapsburgs of the thirteenth century, and both these ancient houses went down together.

Turkey collapsed a few days before Germany in the World War and arranged a separate armistice with the Allies. The country had practically gone to pieces, the empire was no more, and the machinery of government had broken down. Iraq and the Arab countries

were all cut off and were largely under the Allies. Constantinople itself was under the control of the Allies and, facing the great city, in the Bosphorus, British warships stood at anchor, the proud emblems of victorious might. Everywhere there were English, French and Italian troops, and British secret service agents prowled all over the place. The Turkish forts were being dismantled, and the remains of the Turkish army were being made to deliver up their arms. The Young Turk leaders, Enver Pasha and Talaat Beg and others, had run away to other countries. On the Sultan's throne sat the puppet Caliph Wahid-ud-din determined to save himself in the wreck, whatever happened to his country. Another puppet, agreeable to the British government was made grand vizier. The Turkish parliament was dissolved.

Such was the state of affairs in Turkey at the end of 1918 and the beginning of 1919. The Turks were thoroughly worn out and crushed in spirit. Remember what a terrible lot they had had to put up with. Before the four years of the World War there was the Balkan War, and before that the war with Italy, and all this came hard on the heels of the Young Turk revolution, which removed Sultan Abdul Hamid and established a parliament. The Turks have always shown wonderful powers of endurance but this nearly eight years of continuous war was too much for them as it would have been too much for any people. So they gave up all hope and, resigning themselves to an evil fate, waited for the decision of the Allies.

Nearly two years earlier, during war time, the Allies had come to a secret agreement promising Smyrna and the western part of Asia Minor to Italy. Previous to this, Constantinople has been presented, on paper, to Russia, and the Arab countries divided up among the Allies. The last secret agreement, about Asia Minor being handed over to Italy, had to be agreed to by Russia. Unfortunately for Italy, the Bolsheviks seized power before this could be done and so the agreement

was never ratified, much to Italy's disgust and anger with her allies.

So matters stood. The Turk seemed to be down and out, from the Craven Sultan downwards. The 'sick man of Europe' had at last expired, or so it appeared. But there were a few Turks who refused to bow to fate or circumstance, however hopeless resistance might appear. They worked silently and secretly for a while collecting arms and material from the depôts actually under Allied control and shipping them to the interior of Anatolia (Asia Minor) *via* the Black Sea. Chief among these secret workers was Mustafa Kemal Pasha, whose name has already appeared in some of my previous letters.

The English did not like Mustafa Kemal at all. They suspected him and wanted to arrest him. The Sultan, who was wholly under the thumb of the English, did not like him either. But he thought it would be a safe policy to send him away far into the interior, and so Kemal Pasha was appointed Inspector General of the army in Eastern Anatolia. There was practically no army to inspect, and his job was really supposed to be to help the Allies in getting arms from Turkish soldiers. This was an ideal opportunity for Kemal; he jumped at it and went off immediately. It was as well that he did so for, within a few hours of his departure, the Sultan had changed his mind. His fears of Kemal suddenly got the better of him, and at midnight he sent word to the English to stop Kemal. But the bird had flown.

Kemal Pasha and a handful of other Turks began organising national resistance in Anatolia. They proceeded quietly and cautiously at first, trying to win over the officers of the army who were stationed there. Outwardly they acted as the Sultan's agents, but they paid no attention to orders from Constantinople. The course of events helped them. In the Caucasus the English had created an Armenian Republic and promised to add the Turkish eastern provinces to it. (The Armenian Republic is now a part of the Soviet Union).

There was bitter enmity between the Armenians and the Turks, and many a massacre by the one of the other had taken place in the past. So long as the Turks were the bosses they had the best of this bloody game, during Abdul Hamid's time especially. For the Turks to be now put under the Armenians meant almost annihilation for them. They preferred fighting to this. So the Turks of the eastern provinces of Anatolia were willing enough to listen to Kemal Pasha's appeals and exhortations.

Meanwhile, another and a more important happening roused the Turks. Early in 1919 the Italians tried to make good their secret agreement with France and England, which had failed to materialise, by landing troops in Asia Minor. England and France did not like this at all; they did not want to encourage the Italians at the time. Not knowing what else to do, they agreed to Greek troops occupying Smyrna, so that the Italians might be forestalled.

Why were the Greeks chosen in this way? The French and English troops were war weary and almost in a mutinous mood. They wanted to be demobilised and to go home as soon as possible. The Greeks were handy and the Greek government had dreams of annexing both Asia Minor and Constantinople and thus reviving the old Byzantine Empire. Two very able Greeks happened to be friends of Lloyd George, who was then prime minister in England and very powerful in the Allied councils. One of these was Venizelos, off and on prime minister in Greece. The other is a very mysterious person. He is known as Sir Basil Zaharoff now, although his original name was Basileios Zacharias. As a young man, as early as 1877, he became the agent in the Balkans for a British armament firm. When the World War ended, he was the richest man in Europe and perhaps the world, and great statesmen and governments delighted to honour him. He was given high English titles as well as French titles; he owned many newspapers; and he seemed to influence governments

considerably from behind the scenes. The public knew little about him and he kept away from the lime light. He was indeed the typical modern international financier who feels at home in many countries and influences and, to some extent, even controls governments of various democratic countries. People have a sensation of governing themselves in such countries but behind them, unseen, stands the real power, international finance.

How did Zaharoff become so rich and important? His business was the selling of all kinds of armaments and this was a profitable job, especially in the Balkans. But it is believed by many that from his early days he was a member of the British Secret Service. This helped him greatly in business and in politics, and repeated wars brought millions of profit to him, and so he grew into the mysterious giant of to-day. He is apparently still alive although he must be in his eighty-fourth years now (in 1933). He lives at Monte Carlo.

This fabulously rich mystery man and Venizelos managed to get Lloyd George to agree to Greek troops being sent to Asia Minor. Zaharoff offered to finance the undertaking. It was one of his investments that did not pay, for it is said that he lost a hundred million dollars, which he had advanced to the Greeks, in their Turkish war. This was a tidy little sum to lose—it is, I suppose, roughly equivalent to about forty crores of rupees—but it is comforting to know that Zaharoff managed to carry on in spite of it!

Greek troops went across to Asia Minor in British ships and landed at Smyrna in May, 1919, under cover of British, French and American warships. Immediately these troops, the gift of the Allies to Turkey, started massacre and outrage on a tremendous scale. There was a reign of terror which shocked even the jaded conscience of a war-weary world. In Turkey itself it had a most powerful effect, for the Turks saw the fate that Allies seemed to have in store for them. And to be massacred and treated like this by their old

enemies and subjects, the Greeks! Anger blazed in the Turkish heart and the nationalist movement grew. It is said, indeed, that although Kemal Pasha was the leader of this movement, the Greek occupation of Smyrna was its creator. Many of the Turkish officers, who had till then remained undecided, now joined it even though this meant a defiance of the Sultan. For the Sultan had now ordered the arrest of Mustafa Kemal.

In September, 1919, a Congress of elected representatives was held at Sivas in Anatolia. This put the seal on the new resistance, and an executive committee with Kemal as president was formed. A 'National Pact' containing the minimum peace terms with the Allies, amounting to complete independence, was also adopted. The Sultan in Constantinople was impressed and a little frightened. He promised to convene a new session of parliament and ordered elections. In these elections the people of the Sivas Congress got a big majority. Kemal Pasha did not trust the people at Constantinople, and he advised the newly elected deputies not to go there. But they did not agree and, headed by Rauf Beg, they went to Istanbul (as I shall call Constantinople in future). One of the reasons for their doing so was a declaration of the Allies that they would recognise the new parliament if it met in Istanbul under the Sultan's presidentship. Kemal himself did not go although he was a deputy.

The new parliament met in Istanbul in January, 1920, and immediately adopted the 'National Pact' that had been drawn up at the Sivas Congress. The Allied representatives in Istanbul did not like this at all, nor did they like many other things that the parliament did. So six weeks later, they decided to apply their usual and rather coarse tactics which they have often applied in Egypt and elsewhere. The English General marched into Istanbul, took possession of the city, proclaimed martial law, arrested forty of the nationalist deputies including Rauf Beg, and deported them to Malta! These gentle doings of the British were merely

meant to demonstrate that the 'National Pact' was not approved of by the Allies.

Again Turkey was vastly excited. It was plain enough now that the Sultan was a puppet in British hands. Many Turkish deputies escaped to Angora, and parliament met there and called itself the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. It declared itself the government of the country and proclaimed that the Sultan and his government in Istanbul had ceased to function the day the British took possession of the city.

The Sultan retaliated by declaring Kemal Pasha and other outlaws, and excommunicating them and condemning them to death. Further he announced that any person murdering Kemal and the others would perform a sacred duty and would be rewarded here in this world as well as in the next. Remember that the Sultan was also the Caliph, the religious head, and this open invitation to murder, coming from him, was a terrible thing. Kemal Pasha was not only a hunted rebel but a backslider from the faith whom any bigot or fanatic might assassinate. The Sultan did everything in his power to crush the nationalists. He proclaimed a *Jihād* or holy war against them, and organised a 'Caliph's Army' of irregulars to fight them. Men of religion were sent out to organise risings. There were risings everywhere and for a while Civil War raged all over Turkey. It was bitter warfare, between town and town, brother and brother, and there was a merciless cruelty on both sides.

Meanwhile, the Greeks in Smyrna were behaving as if they were the permanent masters of the country, and very barbarous masters. They laid waste fertile valleys and drove away thousands of homeless Turks. They advanced with little effective resistance from the Turks.

It was not a pleasant situation for the nationalists to face—Civil War at home with the sanction of religion against them, and a foreign invader marching on them, and behind both the Sultan and the Greeks, the great

Allied Powers who were dominating the world after their victory over Germany. But Kemal Pasha's slogan to his people was 'win or be wiped out'. Asked by an American what he would do if the nationalists failed, he replied: "A nation which makes the ultimate sacrifices for life and independence does not fail. Failure means the nation is dead".

In August, 1920, the treaty which the Allies had drawn up for unhappy Turkey was published; the Treaty of Sevres it was called. It was the end of Turkish freedom; sentence of death was passed on Turkey as an independent nation. Not only was the country cut up into bits, but even in Istanbul itself an Allied commission was to sit and hold control. There was sorrow all over the country, and a day of national mourning was observed with prayers and a *hartal*, a stoppage of all work. The newspapers came out with black borders. None the less the Sultan's representatives had signed this treaty. The nationalists of course rejected it with scorn, and the result of the publication of the treaty was that their power grew, and more and more Turks turned to them to save their country from this utter degradation.

But who was to enforce this treaty on a rebellious Turkey? The Allies were not prepared to do it themselves. They had demobilised their armies, and at home they had to face an ugly temper among the demobilised soldiers and workers. There was still a spirit of revolution in the air in the Western European countries. Besides, the Allies were falling out among themselves and quarrelling about the division of the spoils of war. In the East, England, and to some extent France, had to face a dangerous situation. Syria, under a French mandate, was seething with dissatisfaction and promised trouble. Egypt had already had a bloody insurrection which the English had crushed. In India, the first great movement of rebellion, peaceful though this was, since the Revolt of 1857, was taking shape. This was the non-cooperation movement under Bapu's leadership,

and one of the main planks of this movement was the question of the Caliphate or *Khilafat* and the treatment given to Turkey.

So we see that the Allies were in no position to enforce their own treaty on Turkey; nor were they prepared to put up with an open flouting of it by the Turkish nationalists. They turned to their friends Venizelos and Zaharoff and these two were perfectly prepared to undertake the job on behalf of Greece. No one expected the demoralised Turks to give much trouble, and the prize of Asia Minor was worth having. More Greek troops went over, and the Graeco-Turkish war began on a big scale. Right through the summer and autumn of 1920 victory sided with the Greeks, and they drove the Turks before them. Kemal Pasha and his colleagues worked feverishly to build up an effective army out of the broken remnants at their disposal. Help and most opportune help came to them when it was most needed. Soviet Russia supplied them with arms and money. The common enemy of both was England.

As Kemal's strength grew the Allies began to feel a little doubtful of the issue of the struggle and they offered better terms. But still they were not good enough for the Kemalists who refused them. Thereupon the Allies washed their hands of the Graeco-Turkish struggle and declared their neutrality. Having got the Greeks to entangle themselves, they left them in the lurch. Indeed France, and to some extent even Italy, tried secretly to make friends with the Turks. The English still stood more or less, but unofficially, on the side of the Greeks.

In the summer of 1921 the Greeks made a great effort to capture the Turkish capital Angora. They came near to it, taking possession of town after town, till at length they were stopped at the Saqariah river. Near this river for three weeks the two armies wrestled with each other, continuously fighting with all the racial bitterness of centuries, and giving no quarter to each other. It became a terrible test of endurance; the Turks

just managed to hold on when the Greeks gave way and retired. As was their way the Greek army went back burning and destroying everything and converting two hundred miles of fertile country into a desert.

The battle of the Saqariah river had been just barely won. It was by no means a final victory, but still it is reckoned among the decisive battles of recent history. It meant the turn of the tide. It was yet another of the great conflicts between East and West which have covered every inch of the soil of Asia Minor with human blood during the past two thousand years and more.

Both armies were exhausted, and they sat down to recuperate and reorganise. But the star of Kemal Pasha was undoubtedly rising. The French government made a treaty with Angora. There was also a treaty between Angora and the Soviet. Recognition by France was a great moral as well as physical gain to Mustafa Kemal. The Turkish troops on the Syrian frontier were thus released for service against Greece. The British government was still supporting the puppet Sultan and the effete Istanbul government and so this French treaty was a blow to it.

In August, 1922, suddenly, but after the most careful preparation, the Turkish army attacked the Greek and simply swept them into the sea. In eight days the Greeks retired 160 miles, but even so, as they retired, they revenged themselves by killing every Turkish man, woman and child they came across. The Turks were equally merciless and few prisoners were taken. Among the prisoners however was the Greek Commander-in-chief and his staff. The greater part of the Greek army escaped by sea from Smyrna, but the city of Smyrna itself was largely burnt down.

Kemal Pasha followed up this victory by marching his troops towards Istanbul. Not far from the city, at Chanak, British troops stopped him, and for some days in September, 1922, there was talk of war between Turkey and Britain. But the British agreed to nearly all the Turkish demands and an armistice was signed, in

which the Allies actually promised to make all the Greek force still in Thrace to evacuate the country. Always, behind the new Turkey, was the spectre of Soviet Russia, and the Allies did not like to provoke a war in which Russia might help Turkey.

Mustafa Kemal had triumphed, and the handful of rebels of 1919 now spoke on equal terms with representatives of the great powers. Many circumstances had gone to help this gallant band—the after war reaction, dissensions among the Allies, the pre-occupation of the English with trouble in India and Egypt, the help of Soviet Russia, the insults offered by the English—but above all they owed their triumph to their own iron determination and will to be free and to the truly wonderful fighting qualities of the Turkish peasant and soldier.

A peace conference was held in Lausanne and it dragged on for many months. There was a curious duel between imperious, domineering Lord Curzon on behalf of England, and rather deaf and stodgy Ismet Pasha, who quietly went on smiling and refusing to hear what he did not want to hear, to the intense irritation of Curzon. Curzon, used to Indian viceregal ways, and otherwise also very pompous, tried blustering methods with no effect whatever on deaf and smiling Ismet. In disgust Curzon came away and the conference broke up. Later it met again, but instead of Curzon another British representative came. All the Turkish demands, as embodied in the 'National Pact', except one, were agreed to and the Treaty of Lausanne was signed in July, 1923. Again the support of Soviet Russia and the mutual jealousies of the Allied Powers had helped Turkey.

Kemal Pasha, the Ghazi, the victorious, had got nearly all he had set out for. But from the first he had shown great wisdom in stating his minimum demands, and to these he stuck even in his hour of victory. He had given up all idea of Turkish dominion over non-Turkish lands like Arabia and Iraq and Palestine and Syria. He wanted Turkey proper, the land inhabited

by the Turkish people, to be free. He did not want the Turks to interfere with other people, nor was he prepared to tolerate any foreign interference in Turkey. Turkey thus became a compact and homogeneous country. Some years later, at Greek suggestion, an extraordinary exchange of populations took place. The remaining Greeks in Anatolia were sent over to Greece, and in exchange Turks from Greece were brought over. About a million and a half Greeks were thus exchanged, and most of these families had lived for generations and centuries in Anatolia and Greece respectively. It was an amazing uprooting of peoples, and it completely upset the economic life of Turkey, especially as the Greeks had a great share in commerce. But this made Turkey even more homogeneous, and perhaps it is now one of the most homogeneous of countries in Asia or Europe.

I have said above that the Turks got all their demands by the Lausanne treaty except one. This one exception was the *vilāyat* or province of Mosul near the Iraq frontier. As the parties could not agree over this the matter was referred to the League of Nations. Mosul was important, partly because of its oil, but more so because of its strategic importance. To hold the mountains of Mosul meant to dominate, to some extent, Turkey and Iraq and Persia and even the Caucasus in Russia. For Turkey this was obviously important. To Britain it was equally important in order to protect the land and air routes to India and as a line of attack or defence against Soviet Russia. If you look at the map you will see how important the situation of Mosul is. The League of Nations decided in favour of Britain on this question. The Turks refused to agree, and again there was talk of war. A new Russo-Turkish treaty was concluded just then in December, 1925. But the Angora government gave way in the end and Mosul went to the new state of Iraq. Iraq is supposed to be independent, but so far it is practically a protectorate of the British, and it swarms with British officials and

advisers.

I remember well how we rejoiced when we heard of Mustafa Kemal's great victory over the Greeks, nearly eleven years ago. This was the battle of Afium Qarahisar in August, 1922, when he broke the Greek front and drove the Greek army to Smyrna and the sea. Many of us were in the Lucknow District Gaol then, and we celebrated the Turkish triumph by decorating our prison barrack with such odds and ends that we could gather, and there was even an attempt, a feeble one, at illumination in the evening.

MUSTAFA KEMAL BREAKS WITH THE PAST

May 8, 1933

We have followed the fortunes of the Turks from the dark period of their defeat to the day of their triumph, and we have seen that, strangely enough, the very steps that the Allies, and especially the British, took to suppress them and weaken them had the contrary effect on them and actually strengthened the nationalists and steeled them to further resistance. The efforts of the Allies to dismember Turkey, the sending of the Greek troops to Smyrna, the British coup d'état of March, 1920, when the nationalist leaders were arrested and deported, the British support of their puppet Sultan against the nationalists—all this went to fire the Turks with anger and enthusiasm. The attempt to humiliate and crush a brave people inevitably has that effect.

What did Mustafa Kemal and his colleagues do with the victory they had gained? Kemal Pasha was no believer in sticking to the old ruts; he wanted to change Turkey thoroughly. But immensely popular as he was after his victory, he had to proceed cautiously for it is no easy matter to uproot a people from their ancient ways founded on long tradition and religion. He wanted to put an end to the Sultanate as well as the Caliphate but many of his colleagues did not agree with him and the general Turkish sentiment was probably against such a change. No one wanted Wahid-ud-din the puppet Sultan to continue. He was hated as a traitor to the country who had tried to sell it to the foreigners. But many people wanted a kind of constitutional Sultanate and Caliphate with the real power

resting in the National Assembly. Kemal Pasha would have no such compromise and he waited for his chance.

As usual the British provided this chance. When the Lausanne Peace Conference was being arranged the British government sent the invitation to it to the Sultan in Istanbul, asking him to send representatives to discuss peace terms, and further requested him to repeat this invitation to Angora. This casual treatment of the Nationalist government at Angora which had won the war, and the deliberate attempt to push forward the puppet Sultan again, created a sensation in Turkey and angered the Turks. They suspected some further intrigue between the British and the traitor Sultan. Mustafa Kemal took immediate advantage of this feeling and got the National Assembly to abolish the Sultanate in November, 1922. But the Caliphate still remained by itself, and it was declared that it continued in the House of Othman. Soon after this a charge of high treason was brought against the ex-Sultan Wahid-uddin. He preferred flight to a public trial and escaped secretly in an English ambulance car which carried him to a British battleship. The National Assembly elected his cousin Abdul Majid Effendi as the new Caliph, who was just the ceremonial religious head with no political power.

The next year, in 1923, there was a formal declaration of the Turkish Republic with Angora for its capital. Mustafa Kemal was elected president, and he concentrated all power in himself so that he became a dictator. The Assembly carried out his mandates. He began now to attack many other old customs and was not very courteous in his treatment of religion. Many people grew dissatisfied with his ways and his dictatorship, especially the religious folk, and these gathered round the new Caliph who was a quiet and inoffensive person. Kemal Pasha did not like this at all. He treated the Caliph rather shabbily and waited for a suitable opportunity to take the next big step.

Again he got his chance soon, and it came in a

curious way. A joint letter was sent to him from London by the Aga Khan and an Indian ex-judge Ameer Ali. They claimed to speak on behalf of the millions of Indian Muslims and they protested against the treatment given to the Caliph and requested that his dignity should be respected and better treatment given. They sent a copy of the letter to some Istanbul papers and it was actually published there before the original reached Angora. There was nothing offensive in the letter, but Kemal Pasha seized hold of it and raised a tremendous outcry. He had got his chance at last and he wanted to make the most of it. So it was announced that all this was another English intrigue to divide the Turks. The Aga Khan, it was said, was the special agent of the English; he lived in England, was chiefly interested in English horse racing, and was always hobnobbing with English politicians. He was not even an orthodox Muslim as he was the head of a special sect. It was further pointed out that during the World War the English had used him as a kind of counterpoise to the Sultan-Caliph in the East, and had increased his prestige by propaganda and otherwise and tried to make him the leader of the Indian Muslims so that they might be kept in hand. If the Aga Khan was so solicitous about the Caliph why had he not supported the Caliph in war time when a *jihād* or holy war had been declared against the English? He had sided with the English then and against the Caliph.

In this way Kemal Pasha created quite a little tempest over the joint letter which its authors, all unaware of its consequences, had sent from London, and he made the Aga Khan appear in a far from favourable light. The poor Istanbul editors who had printed the letter were dubbed traitors and agents of England and were punished severely. Having raised strong feeling in this way, a bill to abolish the Caliphate was presented to the National Assembly and was passed the same day, in March, 1924. Thus passed from the modern stage an ancient institution that had played a great role

in history. There was to be no 'Commander of the Faithful' now, at least so far as Turkey was concerned, for Turkey was now a secular state, that is with no state attachment to any religion.

A short while before, India had been greatly agitated over the Caliphate when this was threatened by the British after the war. 'Khilafat Committees' sprang up all over the country and large numbers of Hindus joined the Muslims in this agitation feeling that the British government was doing an injury to Islam. Now the Turks themselves had deliberately ended the Caliphate; Islam stood without a Caliph. Kemal Pasha was firmly of opinion that Turkey must have no religious entanglements with the Arabic countries or with India. He wanted no leadership of Islam for his country or for himself. He had refused to become Caliph himself when asked to do so by people from India and Egypt. He looked west to Europe and wanted Turkey to become westernised as soon as possible. He was entirely opposed to the Pan-Islamic idea. Pan-Turanianism was the new ideal, Turanian being the race of the Turks. That is, instead of the wider and looser international ideal of Islam, he preferred the stricter and more compact bond of pure nationalism.

I have told you that Turkey had now become a very homogeneous country with few foreign elements. But there was still one non-Turkish race in eastern Turkey, near the Iraq and Persian borders. These were the Kurds, an ancient race speaking an Iranian language. Kurdistan, where these people lived was split up in Turkey, Persia, Iraq, and the Mosul Area. Out of altogether three million Kurds, nearly half still lived in Turkey proper. A modern nationalist movement had begun there soon after the Young Turk revolution of 1908. Even at the Versailles Peace Conference Kurdish representatives had demanded national independence.

In 1925 a great rebellion broke out in the Kurdish area of Turkey. This was just the time when the Mosul dispute was creating friction between England and

Turkey, and Mosul was itself a Kurdish area adjoining the part of Turkey that had rebelled. The Turks naturally concluded that England was behind the rebellion and that British agents had incited the more religious Kurds against the reforms of Kemal Pasha. It is not possible to say if British agents had anything to do with the rebellion, though it was obvious enough that Kurdish trouble in Turkey just then was welcome to the British government. It is clear, however, that religious orthodoxy had much to do with the rising, and it is equally clear that Kurdish nationalism had also much to do with it. Probably the nationalistic motive was the strongest.

Kemal Pasha immediately raised the cry that the Turkish nation was in danger, as England was behind the Kurds. He got the National Assembly to pass a law providing that the use of religion as a means of exciting popular sentiment, whether in speech or in print, should be deemed high treason, and as such should be subject to the most extreme penalties. The teaching of religious doctrines which might subvert loyalty to the Republic was also prohibited in mosques. He then crushed the Kurds without pity, and set up special Tribunals of Independence to try them by the thousand. The Kurdish leaders, Sheikh Said and Doctor Fuad and many others, were executed. They died with the independence of Kurdistan on their lips.

So the Turks, who had only recently been fighting for their own freedom, crushed the Kurds, who sought their own freedom. It is strange how a defensive nationalism develops into an aggressive one, and a fight for freedom becomes one for dominion over others. In 1929 there was another revolt of the Kurds and again it was crushed, for the time being at least. For how can one crush for ever a people who insist on freedom and are prepared to pay the price for it?

Kemal Pasha then turned on all those who had opposed his policy in the National Assembly or outside. The appetite for power of a dictator always grows with

its use; it is never satisfied; it cannot brook any opposition. So Mustafa Kemal resented all opposition, and an attempt to kill him by some fanatic brought matters to a head. The Tribunals of Independence now went all over Turkey trying and punishing heavily all who opposed the Ghazi Pasha. Even the biggest people in the Assembly, old nationalist colleagues of Kemal's, were not spared if they were in the opposition. Rauf Beg whom the British had deported to Malta, and who was later the prime minister of Turkey, was condemned in his absence. Many other important leaders and generals who had fought in the war for independence were disgraced and punished and some were even executed. The charge against them was that they had conspired with the Kurds, and perhaps even with the old enemy, England, against the safety of the State.

Having swept away all opposition Mustafa Kemal was now the unchallenged dictator and Ismet Pasha was his right hand man. He now began to put into practice many of the ideas that had filled his head. He started with a small enough thing and yet a typical one. He attacked the *fez*, the head-dress which had become a symbol of a Turk and to some extent of a Muslim. He began cautiously with the army. Then he himself appeared in a hat in public, to the vast astonishment of the crowd; and he finished up by making the wearing of a *fez* a criminal offence! It sounds rather silly to attach so much importance to the head-dress. What is much more important is what is inside the head, not what is on top of it. But little things sometimes become symbols of big things, and Kemal Pasha apparently attacked old custom and orthodoxy by means of the inoffensive *fez*. There were riots over this question. They were suppressed and heavy punishments awarded.

Having won this first round, Mustafa Kemal went a step further. He closed and dissolved all the monasteries and religious houses and confiscated all their wealth to the state. The dervishes who lived in these houses were told to work for their living. Even their

distinctive dress was prohibited.

Even earlier than this the Muslim religious schools had been abolished and state secular (non-religious) schools started instead. There were many foreign schools and colleges in Turkey. These were also made to give up their religious teaching and if they refused to do so, they were made to close up. Turkish subjects were made compulsory in these foreign schools.

A wholesale change was made in the law. So far, in many matters the law was based on the teachings of the Koran, the *Shari'at* as it is called. Now the Swiss Civil Code and the Italian Penal Code and the German Commercial Code were bodily adopted. This meant a complete change in the personal law which governed marriage, inheritance, etc. The old Islamic law was changed in regard to these matters. Polygamy was abolished.

Another change which went against old religious custom was the encouragement of drawing, painting and sculpture of the human form. This practice is not approved of in Islam. Mustafa Kemal opened schools of art for this purpose for boys and girls.

Turkish women had played quite an important part in the struggle for freedom ever since the days of the Young Turks. Kemal Pasha was particularly keen on their emancipation from all kinds of bonds. A "Society for the Defence of the Rights of Women" was formed and professions were thrown open to them. The *purdah* and the veil was the first to be attacked vigorously and it disappeared with remarkable rapidity. Women have only to be given a chance to tear this veil aside. Kemal Pasha gave them this chance and out they came. He encouraged European dancing very much. Not only was he fond of it himself but it came to represent in his mind the emancipation of women and western civilization. The hat and dancing became the slogans of progress and civilization! Rather poor symbols of the west, but they worked on the surface at least and Turkey changed its headgear and its clothes and its way

of life. A generation of *pardah nasbîn* women was suddenly turned in the course of a few years into lawyers, teachers, doctors and judges. There are even women policemen (or policewomen) in the streets of Istanbul! It is interesting to find how one thing reacts on another. The adoption of the Latin alphabet led to a great increase in the use of typewriters in Turkey, and this meant more short-hand typists, which led to the greater employment of women.

Children were also encouraged in various ways to develop themselves fully as self-reliant and capable citizens, instead of the old learn-by-heart type of the religious schools. One remarkable institution was the "Children's Week". For one week in each year, it is said, each government official was nominally replaced by a child and the whole state was administered by children. I do not know how this works, but it is a fascinating idea, and I am sure that however silly and inexperienced some of the children may be, they cannot behave in a more foolish way than any of our grown-up and staid and solemn looking rulers and officials do.

A small change but still an important indication of the new view point of Turkey's rulers was the discouragement of 'slaaming'. It was made clear by them that hand-shaking was a more civilized form of greeting and should be indulged in future!

Kemal Pasha then launched a great attack on the Turkish language, or rather what he considered the foreign elements in it. Turkish was written in the Arabic script, which is something like the Urdu script, and Kemal Pasha considered this both difficult and foreign. The Soviets had been faced by a similar problem in Central Asia as many of the Tartar peoples had scripts derived from the Arabic or Persian. In 1924 the Soviets held a Conference at Baku to consider this question, and it was decided there to adopt the Latin script for the various Tartar languages of Central Asia. That is to say, the languages remained unchanged but they were written in the Latin or Roman letters.

A special system of notation was devised to give expression to the special sounds of these languages. Mustafa Kemal was attracted to this system and he learnt it. He applied to it to the Turkish language and personally started a vigorous campaign in its favour. After a couple of years of propaganda and teaching, a date was fixed by law after which the use of the Arabic script was forbidden and the Latin script made compulsory. Newspapers, books, everything had to appear in the Latin script. Everyone between the ages of 16 and 40 was made to attend school to learn the Latin alphabet. Officials who did not know it were liable to be dismissed. Prisoners would not be released even at the end of their sentences unless they could read and write in the new script! A dictator can be very thorough, especially if he happens to be popular. Few other governments would dare to interfere so much with people's lives.

The Latin script was thus established in Turkey, but soon another change followed. It was found that Arabic and Persian words could not be easily written in this script; their special sounds and *nuances* could not be expressed in it. Pure Turkish words were not so fine; they were rougher, more direct and vigorous and could be written easily in the new script. The decision was therefore taken to drop Arabic and Persian words from the Turkish language and replace them with pure Turkish words. At the back of this decision was of course a nationalist reason. Kemal Pasha, as I have told you, wanted to cut Turkey off as far as possible from Arabian and eastern influences. The old Turkish language, full of Arabic and Persian words and phrases, might have been suitable enough for the ornate and pompous life of the imperial Ottoman court. It was considered unsuitable for the new vigorous republican Turkey. So the fine words were given up and learned professors and others went to the villages to learn the language of the peasants and hunt for words of good old Turkish stock. This change is going on now. Such a change for us in northern India would mean our

giving up to a large extent our ornate and rather artificial Hindustani of Lucknow and Delhi—a relic of old court life—and adopting instead many of the rustic *ganvārū* words of the village.

These changes in the language have meant changes in the names of towns and persons also. Constantinople, as you know, is now Istanbul, Angora is Ankara, Smyrna is Ismir. People's names in Turkey have been usually taken from the Arabic—Mustafa Kemal is itself is an Arabic name. The new tendency is to give pure Turkish names.

A change which has caused trouble has been the law that Islamic prayers and the *azān*, the call to prayer, must also be in Turkish. These prayers have always been recited by Muslims in the original Arabic; this is done even now in India. It was felt therefore by many *Moulvīs* and people in charge of mosques that this was an improper innovation and they continued prayers in Arabic. There were, and there still are sometimes, riots over this question. But the Turkish government under Kemal Pasha has crushed this as all other opposition.

All these vast social upsets of the past ten years have completely changed the life of the people and a new generation, cut off from the old customs and religious associations, is growing up. But important as these changes are they have not affected the economic life of the country greatly. With some minor changes at the top, the basis of this remains the same as it was. Kemal Pasha is no economist, nor is he in favour of such radical changes as have taken place in Soviet Russia. So that although politically he is on terms of alliance with the Soviets, economically he keeps far from communism. His political and social ideas seem to be derived from a study of the great French Revolution.

There is no strong middle class in Turkey yet, apart from the professional class. The sending away of the Greek and other foreign elements has weakened commercial life. But the Turkish government definitely prefers national poverty and slow industrial growth to

the sacrifice of its economic independence. And because it fears that if foreign capital came into Turkey on a large scale it would mean such a sacrifice, and a consequent exploitation of the country by the foreigner, it has discouraged foreign enterprises. Heavy duties have been put on foreign goods. Many of the industries have been nationalised, that is, the government owns and controls them on behalf of the people. Railway construction is going on at a fair pace.

Kemal Pasha is more interested in agriculture for the Turkish peasant has been the backbone of the Turkish nation and army. Model farms have been made and tractors introduced, and farmers' co-operative societies encouraged.

To-day Turkey, like the rest of the world, is involved in the great depression and is finding it difficult to make both ends meet. Mustafa Kemal, the Ghazi Pasha, continues to be the supreme boss of the country and, in spite of occasional outbursts here and there, there is no strong opposition in evidence. Born in 1880, he is still in the prime of life and has many years of work before him.

INDIA FOLLOWS GANDHI

May 11, 1933

I must tell you now something about recent events in India. We are naturally interested in them far more than in outside happenings, and I have to keep guard on myself so that I might not enter into too many details. Apart from our personal interest, however, India is to-day, as I have told you, one of the major problems of the world. It is the typical and classical country of imperialist domination. The whole structure of British imperialism has rested on it, and other countries have been lured on to the paths of imperialist adventure by this successful British example.

I have told you in my last letter on India of the war-time changes that occurred here; of the growth of Indian industry and the Indian capitalist class, and of the change in British policy towards Indian industry. The industrial and commercial pressure from India on England was increasing, so also was the political pressure. All over the East there was a political awakening, all over the world there was ferment and a *malaise* after the war. In India there was occasional evidence of violent revolutionary activity. The expectations of the people ran high. The British government itself had felt that something must be done and it had taken steps in the political field by enquiry followed by certain proposals for changes contained in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, and in the economic field by throwing out many sops to the rising bourgeoisie but taking care to keep the citadels of power and exploitation in its own hands.

For a short while after the war trade prospered and

there was quite a boom period during which enormous profits were made, especially in Jute in Bengal. The dividends often amounted to over one hundred per cent. Prices went up and to some extent, but comparatively little, wages went up also. With the prices went up also the rent to be paid by tenants to their zamindars. Then came a slump and trade began to languish. The condition of the industrial workers and the agriculturists became worse and discontent grew rapidly. There were many strikes in the factories owing to increasingly hard conditions. In Oudh, where the condition of the tenantry was particularly bad under the taluqdari system, a mighty agrarian movement grew almost spontaneously. Among the educated lower middle classes unemployment increased and resulted in much suffering.

This was the economic background in the early days of the post-war period and if you keep this in view it will help you to understand the political developments. There was a militant spirit in the country which was manifesting itself in a variety of ways. Industrial labour was organising itself into trade unions and later building up an All India Trade Union Congress; small zamindars and peasant proprietors were dissatisfied with government and looking favourably towards political action; even tenants, like the proverbial worm were trying to turn; and the middle classes, especially the unemployed part of them were definitely turning to politics, and a handful of them to revolutionary activities. Hindus and Muslims and Sikhs and others were equally affected by these conditions, for economic conditions pay little heed to religious cleavages. But Muslims had been, in addition, greatly shaken up by the war against Turkey and the expectation that the British government would take possession of the *jazīrat-ul-Arab*, the islands of Arabia, as they are called, the holy cities of Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem (for Jerusalem is a holy city for the Jews, Christians and Muslims).

So India waited after the war; resentful, rather

aggressive, not very hopeful, but still expectant. Within a few months, the first fruits of the new British policy, so eagerly waited for, appeared in the shape of a proposal to pass special laws to control the revolutionary movement. Instead of more freedom there was to be more repression. These bills were based on the report of a committee known as the Rowlatt Bill. But very soon they came to be known as the 'Black Bills' all over the country and everywhere and by every Indian, including even the most moderate, they were denounced. They gave great powers to government and the police to arrest, keep in prison without trial, or to have a secret trial, of anyone they disapproved of or suspected. A famous description of these bills at the time was: *na vakīl, na appeal, na dalīl*. As the outcry against the bills gained volume, a new factor appeared, a little cloud on the political horizon which grew and spread rapidly till it covered the Indian sky.

This new factor was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. He had returned to India from South Africa during war-time and settled down with his colony in an ashram in Sabarmati. He had kept away from politics. He had even helped government in recruiting men for the war. He was of course very well-known in India since his *satyagraha* struggle in South Africa. In 1917 (I am writing all this from memory and I may get the dates wrong) he had championed with success the miserable down-trodden tenants of the European planters in the Champaran District of Behar. Later he had stood up for the peasantry of Kaira in Gujrat. Early in 1919 he was very ill. He had barely recovered from it when the Rowlatt Bill agitation filled the country. He joined his voice also to the universal outcry.

But this voice was somehow different from the others. It was quiet and low and yet it could be heard above the shouting of the multitude; it was soft and gentle and yet there seemed to be steel hidden away somewhere in it; it was courteous and full of appeal and yet there was something grim and frightening in it;

every word used was full of meaning and seemed to carry a deadly earnestness. Behind the language of peace and friendship there was power and the quivering shadow of action and a determination not to submit to a wrong. We are familiar with that voice now; we have heard it often enough during the last fourteen years. But it was new to us in February and March, 1919; we did not quite know what to make of it, but we were thrilled. This was something very different from our noisy politics of condemnation and nothing else, long speeches always ending in the same futile and ineffective resolutions of protest which nobody took very seriously. This was the politics of action, not of talk.

Bapu organised a *Satyagraha Sabhā* of those who were prepared to break chosen laws and thus court imprisonment. This was quite a novel idea then and many of us were excited and many shrunk back. To-day it is the most common place of occurrences and for most of us it has become a fixed and regular part of our lives!

As usual with him, Bapu sent a courteous appeal and warning to the Viceroy. When he saw that the British government were determined to pass the law in spite of the opposition of a united India, he called for an all India day of mourning, a *hartāl*, a stoppage of business, and meetings on the first Sunday after the bills became law. This was to inaugurate the Satyagraha movement, and so Sunday April 6, 1919, was observed as the Satyagraha day all over the country, in town and village. It was the first all India demonstration of the kind and it was a wonderfully impressive one, in which all kinds of people and communities joined. Those of us who had worked for this *hartāl* were amazed at its success. It had been possible for us to approach only a limited number of persons in the cities. But a new spirit was in the air and the message managed to reach somehow the remotest villages of our huge country. For the first time the villager as well as the town worker took part in a political demonstration on a mass scale.

A week before April 6, Delhi, mistaking the date, had observed the *hartāl* on the previous Sunday, March 31. Those were days of an amazing comradeship and good-will among the Hindus and Muslims of Delhi and the remarkable sight was witnessed of Swami Shraddhanand, a great leader of the Araya-Samai, addressing huge audiences in the famous Jāme Masjid of Delhi. On March 31, the police and the military tried to disperse the great crowds in the streets and shot at them killing some people. Swami Shraddhanand, tall and stately in his sanyasi's garb, faced with bared chest and unflinching look the bayonets of the Gurkhas in the Chandni Chowk. He survived them and India was thrilled by the incident; but the tragedy of it is this that less than eight years later he was treacherously stabbed to death by a Muslim fanatic, as he lay on his sick bed.

Events marched rapidly after that Satyagraha Day on April 6. There was trouble in Amritsar on April 10, when an unarmed and bare-headed crowd, mourning for the arrest of its leaders Drs. Kitchlew and Satyapal, was shot at by the military and many were killed; and which thereupon took its mad revenge by killing five or six innocent Englishmen, sitting in their offices, and burning their bank buildings. And then a curtain seemed to drop on the Punjab. It was cut off from the rest of India by a rigid censorship; hardly any news came and it was very difficult for people to enter or leave the province. There was martial law there and the agony of this continued for many months. Slowly, after weeks and months of agonised suspense, the curtain lifted and the horrible truth was known.

I shall not tell you here of the horrors of the martial law period in the Punjab. All the world knows of the massacre that took place on April 13 in the Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, when thousands fell dead and wounded, in that trap of death from which there was no escape. The very word 'Amritsar' has become a synonym for massacre. Bad as this was there were other

and even more shameful deeds all over the Punjab.

It is difficult to forgive all this barbarity and frightfulness even after so many years, and yet it is not difficult to understand it. The British in India, by the very nature of their domination, feel always that they live on the edge of a volcano. They have seldom understood or tried to understand the mind or heart of India. They have lived their life apart, relying on their vast and intricate organisation and the force behind it. But behind all their confidence there is always a fear of the unknown, and India, in spite of a century and half of rule, is an unknown land to them. Memories of the Revolt of 1857 are still fresh in their minds, and they feel as if they lived in a strange and hostile country which might turn at any moment on them and rend them. Such is their general background. When they saw a great movement rising in the country, hostile to them, their fears grew. When news of the bloody deeds that took place in Amritsar on April 10 reached the high officials of the Punjab in Lahore, their nerve failed them completely. They thought that this was another bloody revolt on a big scale, like the one of 1857, and the lives of all English people were in danger. They saw red and they determined to strike terror. Jallianwala Bagh and martial law and all that followed was the result of this attitude of mind.

One can understand, though one cannot excuse, a frightened person misbehaving, even though there was no real reason for his fright. But what amazed and angered India even more was the contemptuous justification of the deed many months afterwards by General Dyer who had been responsible for the firing at Amritsar and his subsequent barbarous neglect of the thousands of the wounded. 'That was none of my business', he had said. Some people in England and the government mildly criticised Dyer, but the general attitude of the British ruling class was displayed in a debate in the House of Lords in which praise was showered on him. All this fed the flames of wrath in

India and a great bitterness arose all over the country over the Punjab wrongs. Enquiry Committees had been appointed both by the government and the Congress to find out what had actually occurred in the Punjab. The country awaited their report.

From that year April 13 has been a National Day for India and the eight days, from April 6 to April 13, the National Week. Jallianwala Bagh is now a place for political pilgrimage. It is an attractively laid out garden now and much of the old horror of it has gone. But the memory lingers.

That year, in December, 1919, by a curious coincidence, the Congress was held in Amritsar. Dadu presided over it, and one of the smallest of the visitors to it was Indira Priyadarshini! No great decision was arrived at by this Congress because the result of the enquiries was awaited, but it was evident that the Congress had changed. There was now a mass character about it and a new, and for some of the old Congressmen, a disturbing vitality. There was Lokamanya Tilak, uncompromising as ever, attending his last Congress for he was to die before the next one was held. There was Bapu, popular with the crowd, and just beginning his long period of domination over the Congress and Indian politics. There came also to the Congress straight from prison many leaders who had been involved in monstrous conspiracy cases during the martial law days and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, but were now amnestied, and the famous Ali brothers just released after many years' detention.

The next year the Congress took the plunge, and adopted Bapu's programme of non-cooperation. A special session in Calcutta adopted this and later the annual session in Nagpur confirmed it. This programme was based on the righting of the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs, and later Swaraj was added to these. The righting of the Punjab wrongs meant the punishment of the guilty officers there. The method of struggle was a perfectly peaceful one, non-violent as it was

called, and its basis was a refusal to help government in its administration and exploitation of India. To begin with there were to be a number of boycotts of titles given by the foreign government, of official functions and the like, of law courts both by lawyers and litigants, of official schools and colleges, and of the new councils under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. Later the boycotts were to extend to the civil and military services and the payment of taxes. On the constructive side stress was laid on hand spinning and khaddar, and on arbitration courts to take the place of the law courts. Two other most important planks were Hindu-Muslim unity and the removal of untouchability among the Hindus.

The Congress also changed its constitution and became a body capable of action, and at the same time it laid itself out for a mass membership.

Now this programme was a totally different thing from what the Congress had so far been doing; indeed it was quite a novel thing in the world, for the Satyagraha in South Africa had been very limited in its scope. It meant immediate and heavy sacrifices for some people, like the lawyers, who were called to give up their practices, and the students who were asked to boycott the government colleges. It was difficult to judge it as there were no standards of comparison. It is not surprising that the old and experienced Congress leaders hesitated and were filled with doubt. The greatest of them, Lokamanya Tilak, had died a little before. Of the other prominent Congress leaders only one, Dadu, supported Gandhiji in the early stages. But there was no doubting the temper of the average Congressman, or the man in the street, or the masses. Bapu carried them off their feet, almost hypnotised them, and with loud shouts of *Mahatma Gandhi kī jai*, they showed their approval of the new gospel of non-violent non-cooperation. The Muslims were as enthusiastic about it as the others. Indeed the Khilafat Committee, under the leadership of the Ali Brothers, had already adopted the programme

before the Congress did so. Soon the mass enthusiasm and the early successes of the movement brought most of the old Congress leaders into it.

I cannot examine, in these letters, the virtues and defects of this movement or the philosophy underlying it. That would be too intricate a question, and perhaps no one can do that satisfactorily enough except the author of the movement, Gandhiji. Still, let us look at it from an outsider's point of view and try to understand why it spread so rapidly and successfully.

I have told you of the economic pressure on the masses and their steadily worsening condition under foreign exploitation and the growth of unemployment among the middle classes. What was the remedy for this? The growth of nationalism turned people's minds to the necessity of political freedom. Freedom was not only necessary because it was degrading to be dependent and un-free, not only because, as Tilak had put it, it was our birthright and we must have it, but also to lessen the burden of poverty from our people. How was freedom to be obtained? Obviously we were not going to get it by remaining quiet and waiting for it to turn up. It was equally clear that methods of mere protest and begging, which the Congress had so far followed with more or less vehemence, were not only undignified for a people but were also futile and ineffective. Never in history had such methods succeeded or induced a ruling or privileged class to part with power. History indeed showed us that peoples and classes who were enslaved had won their freedom through violent rebellion and insurrection.

Armed rebellion seemed out of the question for the Indian people. We were disarmed and most of us did not even know the use of arms. Besides, in a contest of violence, the organised power of the British government, or any state, was far greater than anything that could be raised against it. Armies might mutiny, but unarmed people could not rebel and face armed forces. Individual terrorism, on the other hand, the killing by

bomb or pistol of individual officers, was a bankrupt's creed. It was demoralising for the people and it was ridiculous to think that it could shake a powerfully organised government, however much it might frighten individuals. As I have told you this kind of individual violence was even given up by the Russian revolutionaries.

What then remained? Russia had succeeded in her revolution and established a workers' republic and her methods had been mass action backed by army support. But even in Russia the Soviets had succeeded at a time when the country and the old government had simply gone to pieces, as a result of the war, and there was little left to oppose them. Besides few people in India knew at that time about Russia or Marxism or ever thought in terms of the workers or peasants.

So all these avenues led to nowhere and there seemed to be no way out of the intolerable conditions of a degrading servitude. People who were at all sensitive felt terribly depressed and helpless. This was the moment when Gandhiji put forward his programme of non-cooperation. Like Sinn Fein in Ireland, it taught us to rely on ourselves and build up our own strength, and it was obviously a very effective method of bringing pressure on the government. The government rested very largely on the co-operation, willing or unwilling, of Indians themselves and if this co-operation was withdrawn and the boycotts practised it was quite possible, in theory, to bring down the whole structure of government. Even if the non-cooperation did not go so far, there was no doubt that it could bring tremendous pressure on the government, and at the same time increase the strength of the people. It was to be perfectly peaceful and yet it was not mere non-resistance. Satyagraha was a definite, though non-violent, form of resistance to what was considered wrong. It was, in effect, a peaceful rebellion, a most civilized form of warfare, and yet dangerous to the stability of the state. It was an effective way of getting

the masses to function and it seemed to fit in with the peculiar genius of the Indian people. It put us on our best behaviour and seemed to put the adversary in the wrong. It made us shed the fear that crushed us and we began to look people in the face as we had never done before, and to speak out our minds fully and frankly. A great weight seemed to be lifted from our minds and this new freedom of speech and action filled us with confidence and strength. And, finally, the method of peace prevented to a large extent the growth of those terribly bitter racial and national hatreds which had always so far accompanied such struggles, and thus made the ultimate settlement easier.

It is not surprising, therefore, that this programme of non-cooperation, coupled with the remarkable personality of Gandhiji, caught the imagination of the country and filled it with hope. It spread, and at its approach the old demoralisation vanished. The new Congress attracted most of the vital elements in the country and grew in power and prestige.

Meanwhile new councils and assemblies had been put up under the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme of reform. The Moderates, now called Liberals, had welcomed them and had become ministers and other officials under them. They had become practically merged in government and had no popular backing. The Congress had boycotted these legislatures and little attention was paid to them in the country. All eyes were turned to the real struggle outside, in the towns and villages. For the first time, large number of Congress workers had gone to the villages and established Congress committees there and helped in the political awakening of the villagers.

Matters were coming to a head and, inevitably, the clash occurred in December, 1921. The occasion for this was the visit of the Prince of Wales to India, which had been boycotted by the Congress. Mass arrests took place all over India and the gaols were filled with thousands of 'politicals'. Most of us had our first experience

of the inside of a prison then. Even the president-elect of the Congress, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, was arrested and Hakim Ajmal Khan presided in his place at the Ahmedabad session. But Gandhiji himself was not arrested then, and the movement prospered, and the number of those offering themselves for arrest always exceeded those who were arrested. As the well-known leaders and workers were removed to prison, new and inexperienced and sometimes even undesirable men (and sometimes even secret police agents!) took their place and there was disorganisation and some violence. Early in 1922 a collision occurred at Chauri Chaura near Gorakhpur in the U. P. between a crowd of peasants and the police, and this ended in the peasants burning the police station with some police men inside it. Bapu was greatly shocked at this and some other incidents, which showed that the movement was becoming violent and, at his suggestion, the Congress Working Committee suspended the law-breaking part of non-cooperation. Soon after this Bapu was himself arrested, tried and sentenced to six years' imprisonment. This was in March, 1922, and thus ended the first phase of the non-cooperation movement.

INDIA IN THE NINETEEN-TWENTIES

May 14, 1933

The first phase of the non-cooperation movement ended when civil disobedience was suspended in 1922, but this suspension gave great dissatisfaction to many Congressmen. There had been a great awakening and about thirty thousand civil resisters had gone to gaol. Was all this to count for nothing and the movement to be suddenly suspended in mid career before it had achieved its object, simply because some poor excitable peasants had misbehaved in Chauri Chaura? The objectives had been the righting of the Khilafat and Punjab wrongs and the attainment of Swaraj. The Khilafat question had automatically disappeared because of developments in Turkey and the action taken by Kemal Pasha. The Punjab question had become absorbed in Swaraj, but Swaraj was still far off. There were toy assemblies and councils in Delhi and the provinces, which the Congress had boycotted. These councils had little real power; some of their members were officials, some were nominated by the government, and even the elected members were chosen by a limited franchise. What then was to be done? Gandhiji was in gaol at the time.

The Congress appointed a committee, the Civil Disobedience Inquiry Committee, to consider this question, and after touring the whole of India, and prolonged discussion, the Committee presented a report which split the Congress into two mutually hostile groups. One party, called the 'pro-change' party, was in favour of varying the non-cooperation programme of boycott to this extent that the boycott of the councils should

be lifted. That is to say, they were in favour of Congressmen entering the new Assembly and Councils, not in order to co-operate with government but to put obstacles in the way of government from inside the councils. The other party, the 'no-change' group, was against this change. As the majority in the Congress was at first in favour of the no-change party, the other, who were in favour of capturing the councils, formed a separate party within the Congress. This was called the 'Swaraj Party' and its chief founders were Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das and Dadu. In course of time the influence of this party grew and it came to be recognised by the Congress.

This Swaraj Party had considerable success in the elections in 1923, and in all the councils large groups of the Swarajists were elected. But in very few of them did they have clear majorities because of the official and nominated members. So they tried to form alliances with other groups inside the councils so as to gain a majority for their work. This meant lobbying and political bargaining with more moderate groups who were not prepared to go far. It meant unsavoury compromise and a lowering of ideals. Further it meant a growing devoice from the masses of the Swarajist members who had entered the councils; they got caught more and more in the petty tactics and parliamentary procedure of their mock-parliaments. They passed some brave resolutions and refused to pass the budget for the year. The government ignored their resolutions and the Viceroy certified the budget. Power was not a matter of resolutions and votes, it rested on other factors. The Swarajist resolutions made a brave stir, but then it was clear that something else had to be done to enforce them.

Let us try to understand some of the different forces and movements which were stirring India in these nineteen-twenties. Dominating almost everything else was the Hindu-Muslim question. Friction was increasing, and riots had occurred in many places in north India

over petty questions, like the right of playing music before mosques. This was a strange and sudden change after the remarkable unity of the non-cooperation days. How did this occur, and what was the basis of that unity?

The basis of the national movement was largely economic distress and unemployment. This gave rise to a common anti-British government feeling in all groups and a vague desire for Swaraj. This anti-feeling formed the common link and thus there was common action, but the motives of different groups were different. Swaraj had a different meaning for each such group—the unemployed middle class looked forward to employment, the peasant to a relief from the many burdens imposed on him by the landlord, and so on. Looking at this question from the point of view of religious groups, the Muslims had joined the movement, as a body, chiefly because of the *Khilafat*. This was a purely religious question affecting Muslims only and non-Muslims had nothing to do with it. Bapu however adopted it, and encouraged others to do so, because he felt it his duty to help a brother in distress. He also hoped in this way to bring the Hindus and Muslims nearer each other. The general Muslim outlook was thus one of Muslim nationalism or Muslim internationalism, and not of true nationalism. For the moment the conflict between the two was not apparent.

On the other hand, the Hindu idea of nationalism was definitely one of Hindu nationalism. It was not easy in this case (as it was in the case of the Muslims) to draw a sharp line between this Hindu nationalism and true nationalism. The two over-lapped, as India is the only home of the Hindus and they form a majority there. It was thus more possible for the Hindus to appear as full-blooded nationalists than for the Muslims, though each stood for his own particular brand of nationalism.

Thirdly, there was what might be called real or an nationalism, which was something quite apart as to unity

from these two religious and communal varieties of nationalism. This was of the kind one meets with in western countries, and, strictly speaking, is the only form which can be called nationalism in the modern sense of the word. In this third group there were of course both Hindus and Muslims and others. All these three groups or kinds of nationalism happened to come together in 1920 to 1922, during the non-cooperation movement. The three roads were separate, but for the moment they ran parallel :

The British government was greatly taken aback by the mass movement of 1921. In spite of the long notice they had had, they did not know how to deal with it. They saw that they could not deal with it in their usual direct way of arrest and punishment, as this was the very thing wanted by the Congress. So their secret service evolved a technique to weaken the Congress from inside. Police agents and secret service men entered Congress Committees and created trouble. They encouraged violence, which upset the peaceful methods of non-cooperation and created disorganisation. It was obviously not possible to carry on a peaceful struggle of this peculiar kind and violence side by side. Each of them interfered with the other. Another method adopted by government officials and the secret service was to send secret agents as *sādhūs* and *faqīrs* to create communal trouble.

Such methods are of course always adopted by governments ruling against the will of the people. They are the stock-in-trade of imperialist powers. The fact that these methods succeed indicates the weakness and backwardness of the people, and not so much the sinfulness of the government concerned. To divide off people and make them clash with each other and to weaken them and exploit them is itself a sign of superiority and better organisation. This policy can succeed when there are rifts and cleavages on the side. To say that the British government created Hindu-Muslim problem in India would be pat

wrong, but it would be equally wrong to ignore their continuous efforts to keep it alive and to discourage the coming together of the two communities.

In 1922, after the suspension of the non-cooperation campaign, the ground was favourable for such intrigue. There was the reaction after a strenuous campaign which had suddenly ended without results. The then different roads which had run parallel to each other began to diverge and go apart. The Khilafat question was out of the way. Communal leaders, both Hindu and Muslim, who had been suppressed by the mass enthusiasm of the non-cooperation days, rose again and began taking part in public life. The unemployed middle class Muslims felt that the Hindus monopolised all the jobs and were in their way. They demanded, therefore, separate treatment and separate shares in everything. Politically, the Hindu-Muslim question was essentially a middle class affair, and a quarrel over jobs. Its effect, however, spread to the masses.

The Hindus were on the whole the better off community. Having taken to English education earlier, they had got most of the government jobs. They were richer also. The village financier or banker was the *bania* who exploited the small landholders and tenants and gradually reduced them to beggary and himself took possession of the land. The *bania* exploited Hindu and Muslim tenants and land-holders alike, but his exploitation of the Muslims took a communal turn, especially in provinces where the agriculturists were mainly Muslim. The spread of machine-made goods probably hit the Muslims more than the Hindus as there were relatively more artisans among the Muslims. All these factors went to increase the bitterness between the two major communities of India and to strengthen Muslim nationalism, which looked to the community rather than the country.

The demands of the communal leaders were such as to knock the bottom out of all hopes of true national unity in India. To combat them on their own

communal lines, Hindu communal organisation grew into prominence. Posing as true nationalists, they were as sectarian and narrow as the others. Theirs was the Hindu brand of nationalism. Being to some extent the 'Haves' they disliked sharing their possessions with the 'Have-nots'. Of course the real group of the 'Haves' was the third party, the ruling power, and this enjoyed and profited by the quarrels over the crumbs while it stuck on to the main loaf.

The Congress, as a body, kept away from the communal organisations, but many individual Congressmen were infected. The real nationalists tried to stop this communal frenzy, but with little success; and big riots occurred.

To add to the confusion, a third type of sectional nationalism arose—Sikh nationalism. In the past the dividing line between the Sikhs and the Hindus had been rather vague. The national awakening shook the virile Sikhs up also and they began to work for a more distinct and separate existence. Large numbers among them were ex-soldiers and these gave a stiffening to a small but highly organised community, which, unlike most groups in India, was more used to action than to words. The bulk of them were peasant proprietors in the Punjab, and they felt themselves menaced by the town bankers and other city interests. This was the real motive behind their desire for a separate group recognition. To begin with, the *Akālī* movement, so called because the Akalis formed the active and aggressive group among the Sikhs, interested itself over religious questions, or rather the possession of property belonging to shrines. They came into conflict with the government over this and an amazing exhibition of courage and endurance was seen at the Guru-ka-bagh near Amritsar. The *Akālī jathās* were beaten most brutally by the police but they never took a step back, nor did they raise their hands at the police. The Akalis won in the end and gained possession of their shrines. They then turned to the political field and rivalled the other

communal groups in making extreme demands for themselves.

These narrow communal feelings of different communities, or group nationalisms as I have called them, seem, and in reality were, very unfortunate. And yet they were natural enough. Non-cooperation had stirred up India thoroughly and the first results of this shaking up were these group awakenings and Hindu and Muslim and Sikh nationalisms. There were also many other smaller groups which gained self-consciousness, and especially there were the so-called 'Depressed Classes'. These people, long suppressed by the upper class Hindus, were chiefly the landless labourers in the fields. It was natural that when they gained self-consciousness a desire to get rid of their many disabilities should possess them and a bitter anger against those Hindus who had for centuries oppressed them.

Each awakened group looked at nationalism and patriotism in the light of its own interests. A group or a community is always selfish, just as a nation is selfish, although individuals in the community or nation may take an unselfish view. So each group wanted far more than its share and, inevitably, there was conflict. It is not possible to divide up a rupee into twenty-five or thirty annas. As inter-communal bitterness increased the more extreme communal leaders of each group came to the front, for, in moments of anger, each group chooses as its representative the person who pitches his group demands highest and curses the others most. This again makes matters worse. The conflict was aggravated in a variety of ways by the government, especially by their encouraging the more extreme communal leaders. So the poison went on spreading and we seemed to be in a vicious circle from which there was no obvious way out. This was called the minority question in India which had become an effective barrier to Swaraj.

While these forces and disruptive tendencies were taking shape in India, Gandhiji fell very ill in Yarvada

prison and was operated upon for appendicitis. He was discharged from prison early in 1924. He was greatly distressed by the communal troubles and, many months later, a big riot shocked him so much that he fasted for twenty-one days. You were present during that fast in Delhi and perhaps you remember it. Many 'unity' conferences were held to bring peace but with little result.

The effect of these communal wranglings and group nationalisms was to weaken the Congress as well as the Swaraj Party in the councils. The ideal of Swaraj went into the shade, as most people thought and talked in terms of their groups. The Congress, trying to avoid siding with any group, was attacked by communalists on every side, and, ultimately, many of the prominent workers of the Congress even became involved in communal politics. The principal work of the Congress during these days was one of quiet organisation and cottage industries (*khaddar*), etc., and this helped it to keep in touch with the peasant masses.

The Swarajist or Congress parties in the Assembly and the councils degenerated even more for this life-giving touch of the masses was denied them. Communal friction weakened them, but even more dangerous for them was the huge amount of patronage that was continually being dangled by government before the members of councils. Not only were there ministerships and offices but also the membership of innumerable committees and commissions and even visits to Europe occasionally at public expense. The Congress had boycotted the ministerships and other offices and to this policy it stuck to the end. In other matters, however, it weakened and one step led to another. Many Congress members of councils exploited the position, which they had gained through the help of the Congress, for their personal advantage. Some, like the labour leaders of Europe, made this a stepping-stone to high government office from where they could help in repressing the Congress movement!

There is a moving little poem by Robert Browning called *The Lost Leader*, and I shall give you a few lines from it:

Just for a handful of silver he left us,
Just for a riband to stick in his coat—
Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,
Lost all the others she lets us devote;
They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver,
So much was theirs who so little allowed:
How all our copper had gone for his service!

I have written to you at some length above about our communal troubles, because they played an important part in our political life during the nineteen-twenties. And yet we must not exaggerate them. There is a tendency to give them far more importance than they deserve and every quarrel between a Hindu boy and a Muslim boy is considered a communal quarrel, and every petty riot is given great publicity. We must remember that India is a very big country, and in tens of thousands of towns and villages Hindus and Muslims live at peace with each other, and there is no communal trouble between them. Usually this kind of trouble is confined to a limited number of cities, though sometimes it has spread to the villages. It must also be remembered that the communal question is essentially a middle class question in India, and because our politics are dominated by the middle classes—in the Congress, in the councils, in newspapers and in almost every other form of activity—it assumes an undue prominence. The peasantry are hardly articulate; they have only begun to function politically in recent years in the village Congress Committees and in some Kisan Sabhas and the like. The town workers, especially in the big factories, are a little more wide awake and have organised themselves into trade unions. But even these industrial workers, and far more so the peasantry, look for leadership to individuals drawn from the middle classes. Let us now consider the condition of the masses, the peasantry and industrial labour, during this period.

The rapid growth of Indian industry, which the war had brought about, continued for some years after the peace. British capital poured into India and a great number of new companies were registered to work new factories and industries. The larger industrial concerns and factories especially were financed by foreign capital, and thus big scale industry was practically controlled by British capitalists. A few years ago it was estimated that 87 per cent. of the capital of companies working in India was British, and probably even this is an under estimate. Thus the real economic hold of Britain over India increased. Big towns grew up, at the expense of smaller towns and not of the villages. The textile industry grew specially and so also mining.

There were many committees and commissions appointed by government to consider the new problems of growing industrialisation. These recommended that foreign capital should be encouraged and generally favoured British Industrial interests in India. A Tariff Board was appointed protecting Indian industries. But this protection meant, as I have told you, protecting in many cases British capital in India. The price of these protected goods naturally rose in the markets, as they had to pay duty, and this helped in raising to that extent the cost of living. So that the burden of protection fell on the masses or the purchasers of those goods, and the factory owners got a sheltered market from which competition had been removed or lessened.

With the growth of factories, there was naturally a growth in the numbers of the industrial wage earning class. The government estimate, as long ago as 1922, was that there were as many as twenty millions in this class in India. The landless unemployed of the rural areas drifted to the industrial towns to join this class, and they had to put up as a rule with shameful conditions of exploitation. Conditions which had existed in England a hundred years earlier, in the beginnings of the factory system, were now found in India—terrible long hours of work, miserable wages, degrading and

insanitary living conditions. The class of factory owners had one end in view, to make the most of the boom period by piling up profits, and they did so with great success for some years, paying huge dividends, while the condition of the workers remained miserable. The workers had no share in these mighty profits which they had created, but later, when the boom period was followed by a slump and trade declined, the workers were asked to share in the common misfortune by accepting lower wages. For, unless there were wage cuts the industry could not be run at a profit, and without profit for the owners how could any industry carry on?

As the workers' organisations, the trade unions, grew, the agitation for better labour conditions, shorter hours of work and higher wages, grew with them. Influenced by this partly, and partly by the general world demand that labour should be treated better, the government passed a number of laws improving the lot of the factory worker. I have told you already, in a previous letter, of the Factory Act that was passed. In this it was laid down that children from twelve to fifteen should not work more than six hours a day. There was to be no night work for women and children. For grown-up men and women a maximum of eleven hours a day, and sixty hours a week (a working week consisting of six days) was fixed. This factory law, with some subsequent amendments, still holds.

An Indian Mines Act was passed in 1923 to give some protection to the unhappy workers who have to labour in the mines, chiefly coal mines, underground. Children under thirteen were prohibited from working underground, but women continued doing so, and indeed formed nearly half the total number of workers. For grown-ups the maximum of work fixed for a week of six days were: for above ground work sixty, and for underground work fifty-four. The maximum hours for a day is, I think, twelve hours. I am giving you these figures of hours of work to give you some idea of

labour conditions. Even with their help you can have only a very partial idea, for in addition you must also know many other things, like the amount of wages, living conditions, etc., before a real idea is formed. We cannot go into such matters here. But it is something to realise how boys and girls and men and women have to work as long as eleven hours a day in the factories for a paltry wage which just keeps them alive. The kind of monotonous work they do in the factories is terribly depressing; there is no joy in it; and when they go home, dead tired, a whole family has usually to crowd in a small and hovel with no sanitary conveniences.

Some other laws were also passed which were of help to the workers. There was a Workmen's Compensation Act in 1923, which laid down that in case of accidents, etc., some compensation had to be paid to the injured worker. And there was a Trade Union Act in 1926, dealing with the formation and recognition of trade unions. The trade union movement grew in India with some rapidity during these days, especially in Bombay. An All India Trade Union Congress was formed, but after a few years of existence this split up into two groups. All over the world, ever since the war and the Russian Revolution, labour has been pulled in two different directions. There are the old orthodox and moderate trade unions attached to the Second International (about which I have told you previously), and there is the new and powerful attraction of Soviet Russia and the Third International. So, everywhere, the moderate and usually better off factory workers incline towards safety and the Second International, and the more revolutionary towards the Third. This pull took place in India also, and at the end of 1929 there was a split. Ever since then the labour movement in India has been weak. Many efforts have been made, without success so far, to bring the two groups together.

Of the peasantry I cannot add much here to what I have already written in previous letters. Their condition worsens and they are getting more and more

hopelessly involved in debt to the money-lender. The smaller landlords, the peasant proprietors and the tenants, all get caught in the clutches of the money-lender, the *bania*, the *sābhūkār*. Gradually, as the debt cannot be paid up, the land passes to this money-lender, and the tenant becomes doubly his serf, both as the landlord and as the *sābhūkār*. Usually this *bania* landlord resides in the city and there are no intimate contacts between him and his tenantry. His continuous attempts are directed to getting as much money from the starving peasantry as is possible. The old zamindar, living in the midst of his tenantry, might have shown some pity occasionally; the banker-zamindar living in the city and sending agents for collections, hardly ever shows this weakness.

Various official estimates of the debts of the agricultural classes have been made by government committees. In 1930 it was estimated that the total indebtedness of these classes in the whole of India (excluding Burma) amounted to the prodigious figure of 803 crores. This includes the debts of both landlords and cultivators. This figure must have gone up greatly during the last three years of economic slump.

Thus the agricultural classes, the smaller zamindars and tenants alike, are sinking deeper and deeper into the morass and there is no way out except a radical way which would cut at the root of the present land system. Expensive commissions come to India from England and wander about all over the land in special trains, and then make suggestions, in ponderous tones, of a trivial and superficial character. There have been in recent years two 'Royal Commissions' of this kind, an agricultural commission and a labour commission. Meanwhile, taxation is so arranged that the greatest burden of it falls on the poorest class which is least able to bear it. Expenditure goes largely in the army, in the civil services and in other British charges, from which the masses do not benefit. The expenditure on education is about 9 pence per head as compared with

£ 2-15-0 per head in Britain; thus the British rate of educational expenditure is $73 \frac{1}{3}$ times the Indian.

Attempts have often been made in the past to estimate the national income per head of population. This is a difficult matter and estimates vary greatly. Dadabhai Naoroji calculated it in 1870 as Rs. 20 per head. Recent estimates have gone up to Rs. 67 and, even the most favourable made by some Englishmen do not go beyond Rs. 116. It is interesting to compare this with other countries. In the United States of America the corresponding figure is Rs. 1,925 and even this has been greatly exceeded since; in Britain it is Rs. 1,000 per head. What a tremendous difference!

PEACEFUL REBELLION IN INDIA

May 17, 1933

I have written to you many letters about India and her past, far more than about any other country. But the past is now merging into the present and this letter that I am beginning will, I hope, bring up the story to to-day in India. I shall refer to some recent happenings which are fresh in our minds. The time for writing about them is not yet for the tale is but half told still. But all history ends rather abruptly in the present and the remaining chapters of the story remain hidden in the future. And indeed the story has no ending; it goes on and on.

Towards the end of 1927 the British government announced that they would send a commission to India to make enquiries about future reforms and changes in the structure of government. This announcement was received by all political India with anger and condemnation. The Congress objected to it because it resented the idea that India should be periodically examined for her fitness for self-government. This was the phrase used by the British to cover their desire to hold on to the country as long as possible. The Congress had long claimed the right of self-determination for the country, this right of nationalities which had been so boomed up by the Allies during the World War, and it refused to admit the right of the British Parliament to dictate to India or to be the final arbiter of her future destiny. On these grounds the Congress objected to the new parliamentary commission. The moderate groups in India objected to the commission on other grounds, chiefly because there was no Indian member of it. It

was a purely British commission. Although the grounds of objection were different, the fact remained that almost every group in India, including the most moderate, joined together in condemning it and in advocating its boycott.

About that time, in December, 1927, the Congress met in annual session in Madras and resolved that its goal was national independence for India. This was the first time that the Congress had declared for independence. It did so clearly and firmly enough, and yet, perhaps, at that time it was not very sure of its ground. It was two years later, in Lahore, that independence became definitely the creed of the National Congress. The fact that the Madras Congress was not very decided about independence was apparent from another resolution that it passed, inviting all other groups and organisations in India to co-operate with it in drawing up a constitution for India. It was obvious that the moderate groups were not prepared to go as far as independence. In this way the Madras Congress created the All Parties Conference which had a brief but active career.

The next year, 1928, saw the British commission in India. As I have said, it was generally boycotted and there were big demonstrations against it wherever it went. The Simon Commission it was called, from the name of its chairman, and '*Simon go back*' became a familiar cry all over India. On many occasions the police indulged in *lathi* charges on the demonstrators; in Lahore Lala Lajpat Rai even was beaten by the police. Some months later Lalaji died and it was considered probable by doctors that the police beating had hastened his death. All this naturally created great excitement and anger in the country.

Meanwhile, the All Parties Conference was trying to draw up a constitution and to find a solution for the communal tangle. Constitution making indeed was quite popular with our politicians just then, as if to gain power all that was necessary was a paper constitution.

The All Parties Conference produced a report containing its proposals for a constitution and the communal question. This report is known as the *Nehru Report*, as Dadu was the chairman of the committee which drafted it.

Another notable event of the year was a great peasant campaign at Bardoli in Gujrat against the increase in revenue by the government. Gujrat has no big zamindari system as in the United Provinces; there are peasant proprietors there. Under the leadership of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, these peasants put up a remarkably gallant fight and won a great victory.

The Calcutta Congress of December, 1928, was in a sense a come down from Madras with its decision on independence. It adopted the constitution contained in the Nehru Report, and this was much less than independence. It resembled vaguely the constitutions of the British dominions. But even in adopting it, the Congress did so provisionally and fixed a time limit of one year. If there was no agreement with the British government on this basis within a year then the Congress was to revert to independence. Thus the Congress and the country were inevitably heading towards a crisis.

Labour also was very restive, and in some of the big industrial centres was becoming aggressive as attempts were made to reduce wages. In Bombay it was particularly well organised, and great strikes took place in which a hundred thousand or more workers would take part. Socialistic and to some extent communistic ideas began to spread among the workers, and the government, frightened by the revolutionary development, and by labour's growing strength, suddenly arrested thirty-two labour leaders early in 1929 and started a big conspiracy case against them. This case has become famous all over the world as the Meerut case. After a trial lasting three and three quarter years nearly all the accused were sentenced this year to prodigious terms of imprisonment. And the curious part of it is this that none of them was charged

with any actual act of rebellion or even breach of the peace. Their offence seems to have been the holding of and the attempt to spread communistic opinions.

Another form of activity, smouldering underneath and sometimes appearing on the surface, was that of the people believing in violent methods to bring about a revolution. This was chiefly in Bengal, to some extent in the Punjab, and a little in the United Provinces. The British government tried to suppress it in many ways and there were numerous conspiracy cases. A special law, called the 'Bengal Ordinance', was issued by the government to enable them to arrest and keep in prison without trial anyone they chose to suspect. Under this ordinance many hundreds of Bengali youths were arrested and imprisoned; *detenus* they were called and there was no time limit to the period of their imprisonment. It is interesting to note that when this extraordinary ordinance was issued a Labour government was in office in England and was thus responsible for the ordinance.

There were a number of acts of terrorism by these revolutionaries, most of them in Bengal. Three events, however, attracted special attention. One was the shooting of a British police officer in Lahore, who was supposed to have hit Lala Lajpat Rai at the Simon demonstration. The second was the throwing of a bomb in the Assembly building in Delhi by Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwara Dutt. This bomb, however, did little damage and seems to have been meant to create a big noise and attract the country's attention. The third occurrence was in Chittagong in 1930 just about the time when the Civil Disobedience movement was beginning. It was a daring and big-scale raid on the armoury and it met with some success. The Government has adopted every conceivable device to crush this movement. There have been spies and informers and large numbers of arrests and conspiracy cases, and *detenus* (sometimes people who are acquitted in a court of law and immediately re-arrested and kept as *detenus* under the

Ordinance), and parts of East Bengal are still in military occupation, and people cannot move without permits, nor can they go on bicycles, or even wear any dress they choose. There are heavy fines on whole towns and villages for the offence of not giving information to the police. Those who are suspected of being terrorists are hunted down like dogs. This has been going on for a long time now, and apparently it still goes on.

In one of the conspiracy cases in Lahore in 1929 one of the prisoners, Jatindranath Das, went on hunger strike as a protest against jail treatment. This boy stuck to it to the very end and died of it on the sixty-first day. Jatin Das's self-immolation deeply affected India. Another event that shocked and pained the country was the execution of Bhagat Singh early in 1931.

I must go back to Congress politics now. The year of grace fixed by the Calcutta Congress was expiring. Towards the end of 1929 the British government made an effort to prevent the serious developments which were in the air. It made a vague declaration about future progress. Even then the Congress offered its co-operation, subject to certain conditions. These conditions not being fulfilled, the Lahore Congress of December, 1929, inevitably decided in favour of independence and a struggle to attain it. This decision, as it happened, was made as the old year, and the year of grace, expired at midnight of December 31.

So 1930 opened with the air thick with the shadow of coming events. There were preparations for civil disobedience. The Assembly and Councils were boycotted again and Congress members resigned from them. On January 26, a special pledge of independence was taken all over the country at innumerable gatherings in the cities and villages, and the anniversary of that day is celebrated annually as *Independence Day*. In March began Bapu's famous march to Dandi on the sea coast to break the salt law there. He had chosen the salt tax to initiate his campaign, because this tax fell heavily

on the poor and was thus an especially bad tax.

By the middle of April, 1930, the civil disobedience campaign was in full swing; and not only was the salt law violated everywhere but other laws also. There was peaceful rebellion all over the country, and new laws and ordinances came in rapid succession in order to crush it. But these very ordinances became the objects of civil disobedience. There were mass arrests, and brutal *lathi* charges became frequent occurrences, and firing at peaceful crowds, and a proscription of Congress committees, and gagging of the press, and censorship, and beatings, and harsh jail treatment. But I do not want to say much of this period here. There was ordinance rule on the one side, and a determined and systematic breach of these ordinances on the other, as well as boycott of foreign cloth and British goods. Nearly a hundred thousand persons went to prison, and for a while this peaceful and yet determined struggle in India held the world's attention.

Three facts I should like to bring to your notice. The first was the remarkable political awakening of the North-West Frontier province. Right at the beginning of the struggle, in April, 1930, there was a tremendous shooting down of peaceful crowds in Peshawar; and right through the year our frontier countrymen put up with an amazing amount of brutal treatment with gallant fortitude. This was doubly remarkable as the frontier people are very far from being peaceful and they flare up at the slightest provocation. And yet they held their peace. It was not surprising for Bengal or Bombay, with a long record of political work behind them, to take a leading part in the campaign. But it was surprising and most creditable for new comers to the political field, like the Pathans, to come immediately to the forefront and play such a brave part.

The second noteworthy fact, and certainly the most outstanding event of a great year, was the remarkable awakening of Indian women. The way hundreds of thousands of them shed their veils and, leaving their

sheltered homes, came into the street and the market place to fight side by side in the struggle with their brothers, and often put to shame their men-folk, was something that could hardly be believed by those who did not see it.

The third fact worth noting was that as the movement developed an economic factor came into play so far as the peasantry were concerned. The year 1930 was the first year of a great world crisis, which is still continuing, and prices of agricultural produce fell greatly. The peasantry were hard hit by this, as their income depends on their selling their produce. The non-payment of taxes, therefore, fitted in with their distress and Swaraj became for them not just a distant political goal but, what was more important, an immediate economic question. Thus the movement began to have a new and a more intimate meaning for them, and an element of class conflict, as between landlords and tenants, came in. This was so especially in the United Provinces and in west India.

While civil disobedience was flourishing in India, across the seas in London a *Round Table Conference* was held by the British government with much pomp and circumstance. The Congress had nothing to do with it. The Indians who went to it were all government nominees. Like marionettes, or shadow figures without substance, they flitted about that London stage, well realising that the real struggle was taking place in India. The government kept the communal problem in the forefront of the discussions to show up the weaknesses of the Indians; they had taken care to nominate the most extreme communal and reactionary people to the conference so that there was no chance whatever of a settlement.

In March, 1931, there came a truce or a provisional settlement between the Congress and the government to enable further discussions to take place. Civil disobedience was discontinued and thousands of civil disobedience prisoners were released and the ordinances

were withdrawn. But large numbers of political prisoners still remained (and remain now) in prison—those of the 1914 conspiracy cases, Punjab Martial Law cases, Meerut case, the hundreds of detenus in Bengal, and so many others from numerous conspiracy cases. They form a large permanent political population of Indian jails; while civil disobedience prisoners come and go in masses, the others carry on without break or respite.

It was interesting to see, after the Delhi truce, how everyone tried to be very friendly with the Congress, even those who had usually attacked it and condemned it. The civil disobedience movement had impressed them and seeing the strength of the Congress, they began to think that the Congress might have a great share in power in the future. And so, opportunists as they always had been, they rushed to the Congress and favoured it. It is a sad but true fact that in political struggle it often happens that the class which sacrifices most gets least, and the people who sit safely at home are the most prominent in sharing the spoils.

The year 1931 saw Bapu go to the second Round Table Conference in London on behalf of the Congress. In India itself three problems assumed importance and held the attention both of the Congress and the government. The first was Bengal where the government carried on a severe campaign against political workers under the guise of putting down terrorism. A new and far stiffer ordinance was issued and Bengal knew no peace in spite of the Delhi settlement.

The second problem was in the Frontier Province where the political awakening was still driving the people to some action. Under the leadership of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a huge, disciplined but peaceful organisation was spreading. The *Khudāī khidmatgār* they were called and sometimes 'Red-shirts' because they wore a red uniform (and not because of any affiliation with socialists or communists). Government did not like this movement at all. It was afraid of it as it knew

the worth of a good Pathan fighter.

The third problem arose in the United Provinces. The poor tenant had been very hard hit by the world depression and the fall in prices. He could not pay his rent. Some remissions were given to him but they were not considered enough. Congress tried to mediate for him without much result. Matters came to a head when the time for rent collections came in November, 1931. The Congress, beginning with Allahabad district, advised the tenants as well as zamindars to withhold rent and revenue pending a settlement of the question of remissions. Forthwith the government countered by an ordinance for the United Provinces. It was a very stiff and a comprehensive ordinance giving full powers to the district officials to crush every kind of activity and even to prevent the movements of individuals.

Close on the heels of this came two amazing ordinances for the Frontier Province, and both in the U. P. and in the Frontier arrests of leading Congressmen took place.

Such was the position that faced Bapu when he returned, without success from London, in the last week of the year. Three provinces under ordinance rule and several of his colleagues already in prison. Within a week the Congress had declared civil disobedience again and government, on its part, had outlawed the Congress committees and a host of allied organisations.

This struggle has gone on now for a year and a half and it still goes on, and these many letters that I have written to you during this period are an indirect and minor result of it! It has been a far stiffer fight than the one of 1930. The government prepared themselves carefully for it, profiting by previous experience. The veil of legality and the forms of law were set aside and, under all embracing ordinances, a kind of martial law under civil officers has prevailed over the country. The real brute force of the state has been very much in evidence. This was a natural development, for the more powerful grows the nationalist movement, and the

more it threatens the very basis of the foreign government, the fiercer becomes the latter's resistance. The pious phrases of trusteeship and goodwill are put aside, and the bludgeon and the bayonet appear as the real props of foreign rule. Law becomes the will not only of the viceroy at the top but of each petty official who can do what he wills, well knowing that he will be supported by his superiors. The secret service and the C. I. D. especially spread out everywhere, as in Russia of Tsarist days, and grow in power. There are no checks, and the appetite for unrestrained power grows with use. A government which governs chiefly through its secret service, and a country which suffer under this, are soon demoralised. For every secret service luxuriates in an atmosphere of intrigue, spies, lies, terrorism, provocation, frame-ups, blackmail and the like. During the last three years in India the excessive powers given to petty officials and the police and the C. I. D. and the use made of them have resulted in a progressive brutalization and deterioration of these services. Every effort has been made to avoid sending people to jail and, instead, severe and cruel beatings have been given them. The object has been to terrorise.

I must not go into details. One interesting feature of the government's policy on this occasion has been a widespread confiscation of property, houses, motor cars, moneys in banks, etc., both of organisations and individuals. This was meant to strike at the middle class supporters of the Congress. Private property is no longer sacred. Government seeks to confiscate it on some pretext or other, just as violence is only called bad and immoral when some one used it in an attempt to change existing conditions, whilst government considers itself perfectly justified in indulging in the most ruthless and extensive violence in order to defend the existing order.

A minor but striking feature of one of the ordinances has been that parents and guardians are to be punished for the offences of their children or wards!

While all this has been happening in India, the British propaganda machine, which has long been known to be remarkably efficient, has been busy in painting a rosy picture of India. In India itself no newspaper dares to print the truth for fear of consequences—even the publication of the names of persons arrested is an offence.

But the most revealing feature of British policy in India has been their attempt to form an alliance with all the most reactionary elements in India. The British empire stands to-day relying on feudal and other extreme forces of reaction in its attempt to fight the forces of progress. They have tried to rally 'vested interests' to their support, frightening them with fear of social revolution if the British authority was removed from India. The feudal princes are the first line of defence; then come the big zamindar classes. By clever manœuvring and pushing on the extreme communalists to the front, the problem of minorities has been made into a stumbling block to Indian freedom. Recently, the remarkable sight was witnessed of the British government expressing every sympathy and cordiality with the extreme religious reactionaries among the Hindus over the temple entry question. Everywhere the British seek their support in reaction and narrow bigotry and a misguided self-interest.

A mass struggle has one great advantage. It is the best and swiftest method, though perhaps a painful one, of giving political education to the masses. For the masses need the "schooling of big events". Ordinary peacetime political activity, such as elections in democratic countries, often confuses the average person. There is a deluge of oratory and every candidate promises all manner of fine things and the poor voter, or the man in the field or factory or shop, is confused. There are no very clear lines of cleavage for him between one group and another. But when a mass struggle comes, or in time of revolution, the real position stands out clearly as if lit up by lightning. In such moments of

crisis, groups or classes or individuals cannot hide their real feelings or character. Truth will out. Not only is a time of revolution a test of character, of courage, endurance, selflessness and class feeling, it also brings out the real conflicts between different classes and groups, which had so far been covered up by fine and vague phrases.

Civil disobedience in India has been a national struggle; it has certainly not been a class struggle. It has definitely been a middle class movement with peasant backing. It could not therefore separate the classes as a class movement would have done. And yet even in this national movement there has been to some extent a lining up of classes. Some of these, like the feudal princes, the taluqdars and big zamindars, are completely tied up with the government. They shout out loudly that they prefer their class interests to national freedom, or that national freedom should only come subject to all manner of safeguards to protect their special privileges. So that it is clear that nothing can be expected from these classes in a national struggle except opposition to the national cause. They have definitely cast their lot with the foreign government.

To some extent all possessing classes, all with big vested interests, fear a big change lest it interfere with their privileges. The big bourgeoisie, the so-called upper middle class, dislike the foreign government and wants to take its place. To some extent it is sympathetic with the Congress challenge to government as this might hasten a political change in India to their advantage. But at the same time they fear the masses and even the petty bourgeoisie, and are also apprehensive that a real victory of the Congress might result in a social change not to their liking. So these people, as a class, sit on the hedge, without definitely committing themselves, and mildly criticise both the government and the Congress and wait patiently for the time when they can take a big share in the spoils of power. But if any hint is made of a social revolution or of an attack

on any vested interest of theirs, then they flare up in great anger. It is extraordinary how passionately angry people become in the defence of their special rights and privileges! The less moral claim they have to them the more they resent interference.

The minorities question is also largely one of vested interests of special groups. Many people are continually chanting about Hindu-Muslim Unity. It is obvious enough that such union is highly desirable. But it is equally obvious that mere incantation of the phrase like a magic *mantra* will not do any good. Nor will make-shift pacts and compromises help. Unfortunately the real questions in issue are often covered up by such phrases as Hindu-Muslim Unity. At bottom, apart from the vested interests of some groups, the questions are economic. Conflicts of interests whether they are between different communities, or between democracy and feudalism, cannot be resolved by smiles and embraces and assurances of one's own bona fides. A problem of arithmetic or algebra is not solved by smiling at it. Nor is it possible to reconcile the irreconcilable by walking round and round it.

The Congress movement has recently become a petty bourgeois movement with a strong backing of small land-holders and the peasantry. There is a tendency for it to represent the interests of the masses more than it used to, and an interesting revolution on fundamental rights and economic rights was passed by the Karachi Congress in 1931. As the Congress leans towards the masses the big possessing classes feel anxious and keep away, although its basis is still nationalistic.

In India many people have developed a habit of going again and again to prison, and some remain there for years continuously. A group of other persons have developed another habit—of going every year at public expense to London to attend meetings of the Round Table Conference. Year after year they go and talk and talk and help the British in drafting a constitution whose chief function seems to be to ensure British rule

in India for generations and preserve every vested interest. The idea of a federation has arisen in order to take the help of the feudal princes in keeping the rest of India in order. A brilliant English writer, R. H. Tawney, referring to a programme for the British Labour Party has suggested that it was not the function of the Party "to offer the largest possible number of carrots to the largest possible number of donkeys". One would imagine that the constitution makers in London considered this to be one of their chief functions.

Recently the British government has put forward its proposals for the Indian constitution in a booklet called the *White Paper*. They have done the job thoroughly and included every conceivable safeguard that the wit of man could devise, not only to hold on to their interests, but to strengthen their three fold occupation of India—military, civil and commercial. Every vested interest is protected and the biggest being that of England is most effectively protected. So also the princes, the property owning classes, the services, and the hangers-on of the British. Every vested interest has been generously provided for. It is unfortunate that this vicarious generosity has resulted in little being left over for the three hundred and thirty odd millions of India. But they had no vested interest, except that of life and that did not count.

The British proposals remind one of an Urdu couplet by Akbar, a poet of Allahabad, who died a few years ago. He wrote this at the time of the Curzon Delhi Durbar of 1903:

*Mahfil un ki sâqī un kâ
Ankhen apnī bāqī un kâ**

The real question is one of ending the exploitation of the masses, and so long as this is not done, how can there be peace in India, or our end of the struggle for freedom?

*Theirs is the assemblage, Theirs the cup-bearer.
The eyes belong to us, the rest is theirs.

And so the story goes on. To-day (May 17) is the tenth day of Bapu's fast. He has done well so far and it seems that he will pull through. He has been discharged from prison and civil disobedience has been suspended by him for six weeks because of his fast. And after? who knows?

I have neglected Burma and must tell you something about her. She did not take part in the civil disobedience movement of 1930 or 1932. But in 1930 and 1931 there was a great peasant revolt in North Burma due apparently to great economic distress. This revolt was put down with considerable barbarity by the British. The British government is now trying hard to separate Burma from India, and Burma is much agitated over this issue. The majority of the people there do not appear to want to separate.

And so—*au revoir*—India!

EGYPT'S FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

May 20, 1933

Let us now go to Egypt and follow another struggle between a growing nationalism and an imperialist power. That power there, as in India, is Britain. Egypt is, in many ways, very different from India, and Britain has been there for a comparatively short period, and yet there are numerous parallels and common features in the two countries. The nationalist movements of India and Egypt have adopted different methods but, fundamentally, the urge to national freedom is the same and the objective is the same. And the way imperialism functions in its efforts to suppress these nationalist movements is also much the same. So each of us can learn much from the other's experiences. For us in India there is an especial lesson for we can see, in the example of Egypt, what British grants of 'freedom' amount to, and what they lead to.

Of all the Arab countries (Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Palestine) Egypt is the most advanced. It has been the highway between East and West, the great trade route for steamships ever since the building of the Suez Canal. With the new Europe of the nineteenth century it has had far more contacts than any of the countries of Western Asia. It forms a very distinct national unit, quite separate from the other Arab countries, but with the closest cultural ties with them, for they all have the same language, traditions, and religion. The daily newspapers of Cairo go to all the Arab countries and have great influence there. Among all these countries the nationalist movement first took shape in Egypt, and it was thus natural for Egyptian nationalism to become

a model for the other Arab countries.

I have told you, in my last letter on Egypt, about the nationalist movement of 1881-82 headed by Arabi Pasha and how this was crushed by Britain. I have also told you of the early reformers, of Jemal-ud-din Afghani, and of the impact of the new ideas from the west on orthodox Islam. These reformers tried to harmonize Islam with modern progress by going back to old principles and discarding many of the accretions of religion, the many things that get added on to it in the course of centuries. The next step among progressive people was to separate religion from social institutions. The old religions have a way of covering and regulating every aspect of our day to day lives. Thus Hinduism and Islam, quite apart from their purely religious teachings, lay down social codes and rules about marriage, inheritance, civil and criminal law, political organisation, and indeed almost everything else. In other words, they lay down a complete structure for society and try to perpetuate this by giving it religious sanction and authority. Hinduism has gone furthest in this respect by its rigid system of caste. This religious perpetuation of a social structure makes change difficult. So in Egypt, as elsewhere, progressive people tried to separate religion from the social structure and institutions. The reason they gave was that these old institutions, which religion or custom had imposed on the people in the past, were no doubt proper and suitable for the conditions that prevailed at the time of the scriptures. But these conditions had greatly changed now, and the old institutions did not fit in with them. Ordinary common sense told us that a rule made for a bullock cart would not suit a motor car or a railway train.

Such was the argument used by these progressives and reformers. This led to increasing secularisation of the state and of many institutions, that is to say they were separated from religion. This process went furthest, as we have seen, in Turkey. The President

of the Turkish Republic does not even take his oath of office in the name of God; he takes it on his honour. Matters have not developed to this extent in Egypt, but the same tendency is at work there and in other Islamic countries. The Turks, Egyptians, Syrians, Persians, etc., speak to-day far more in the new language of nationalism than in the old one of the religion. Probably the Muslims of India have resisted this nationalising process more than any other large group of Muslims in the world, and they are thus far more conservative and religious-minded than their co-religionists of the Islamic countries. This is a curious and striking fact. The new nationalism has usually gone hand in hand with the development of the bourgeoisie, the middle classes under the capitalist economic system. The Muslims in India have been backward in developing this bourgeoisie, and this failure may have obstructed their march to nationalism. It is also possible that the fact of being a minority community in India has so worked on their fears as to make them more conservative and tied to old tradition, and suspicious of new fangled notions and ideas. It must have been some such psychology which made the Hindus draw into their shells and become a very rigid caste-bound community when the early Islamic invasions took place, nearly a thousand years ago.

The new middle class grew in Egypt, with the growth of foreign trade, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and afterwards. A member of this class, having risen to it from a *fellah* or peasant family, was Saad Zaghlul. He was a young man when Arabi Pasha challenged the British in 1881-82 and he served under Arabi. From that time onwards to his death in 1927, for forty-five years, he worked for Egyptian freedom and became the leader of the Egyptian independence movement. He was Egypt's unquestioned leader, beloved of the peasantry from which he had sprung, and idolised by the middle classes to which he belonged. But the so-called aristocracy, the old feudal landlord class, did not take to him kindly. They did

not like the rising middle class which was gradually pushing them away from their dominant position in the country. Zaghlul was an upstart in their eyes, and he had to struggle against them as a leader and representative of his own class. As in India, the British tried to find support for themselves in this feudal landowning class. This class was really more Turkish than Egyptian, and represented the old governing nobility.

Thus the British in Egypt, in the approved and well-tried fashion of all imperialism, tried to attach to themselves some social group or political section, and obstructed the development of a single nationality by setting one class or section against another. As in India, they tried to raise a minority question, the Christian Copts forming a minority in Egypt, but in this they failed. And all this they did, also in the approved fashion, with pious phrases on their lips and pleas that everything that they did was for the benefit of the other party; they were the 'trustees' of the 'dumb millions' and all would be well if 'agitators' and such like people with 'no stake in the country', would not create trouble. Incidentally, this process of conferring benefits often resolved itself into shooting down large numbers of the people benefited. Perhaps in this way they were made to escape the miseries of this world, and their departure for paradise was hastened.

Egypt had been under martial law right through the war and for long afterwards. During war-time a Disarmament Act had been passed and a Conscription Act. The country was full of British troops. It had been declared a British protectorate at the beginning of the war.

With the coming of peace in 1918 the nationalists in Egypt became active again and drew up Egypt's case for independence to place this before the British government as well as before the Peace Conference in Paris. There were no real parties in Egypt then. One national Party, called the *Watanists*, existed with a small membership. It was proposed to send a big deputation

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under Saad Zaghlul Pasha to London and Paris to plead for Egypt's independence, and in order to make this deputation a national one with strong backing, a wide spread organisation was set up. This was the origin of the great *Wafd* party of Egypt for *wafd* means deputation. The British government refused to permit this deputation to go to London, and, in March, 1919, arrested Zaghlul and other leaders.

This resulted in the outbreak of a bloody revolution. Some British people were killed and the city of Cairo and other centres passed into the hands of the revolutionary committee. Nationalist Committees of Public Safety were formed in many places. The university students took a great part in this rebellion. After these initial successes, however, the rebellion was to a large extent suppressed, though occasionally English officials were killed. But though the active insurrection was suppressed, the movement was far from being crushed. It changed its tactics and entered upon a second phase, that of passive resistance. So successful was this that the British government were forced to take some steps to meet the Egyptian demand. A commission was sent from England under Lord Milner. The Egyptian nationalist decided to boycott this commission, and they did so with remarkable success. Again the students played an important part in the boycott of the Milner Commission. The Commission was so impressed by the national resistance that they made some far reaching recommendations. The British government ignored these and the struggle in Egypt continued. For three years, from early in 1919 to early in 1922, this struggle continued, and the Egyptians would agree to nothing short of complete independence—*istiqlāl el-tām*.

Zaghlul Pasha had been released some time after his arrest in 1919. In December, 1921, he was again arrested and was deported. But this did not improve the situation in Egypt from the point of view of the British, and they were compelled to take some action to

conciliate the Egyptians. All attempts at compromise had failed, although Zaghlul was far from being an uncompromising extremist. Indeed an actual attempt at assassinating Zaghlul was made once by some people who accused him of betraying his country by trying to make weak compromises with the British. But the real reasons for the failure of the British government and the Egyptian nationalists to agree were then, and continue to be still, fundamental. They are similar to the reasons which prevent a compromise in India. The Egyptian nationalists did not wish to ignore all British interests in Egypt. They were perfectly prepared to discuss these and to make allowances for Britain's special interest in her imperial trade and strategic routes and other matters, but they would discuss these questions only after their full independence was acknowledged and without prejudice to that independence. England, on the other hand, thought that it was her business to say exactly how much freedom was to be given, and this freedom was to be subject to her own interests, which must first be protected.

So there was no common ground for agreement. But the British government felt that something had to be done soon and so, even without an agreement, they made a declaration on February 28, 1922. They stated that in future they would recognise Egypt as an "independent sovereign state" but, and this was a big but, four matters were reserved for further consideration. These were:

1. Security of the communications of the British Empire in Egypt.
2. Defence of Egypt against all foreign aggression or interference, direct or indirect.
3. Protection of foreign interests in Egypt and the protection of minorities.
4. The question of the future of the Sudan.

These reservations bear a family likeness to their cousins in India; we call them 'safeguards' here, and their brood is far more numerous here. These reserva-

tions were not accepted then, and have not been accepted till now, by the Egyptians, for simple and innocent as they looked, they meant that there was to be no real independence either in domestic or foreign matters. So that the declaration of independence of February 28, 1922, was a one-sided act of the British government which was never recognised by Egypt. What even independence can mean with reservations or safeguards in favour of Britain has been amply demonstrated in Egypt during the last eleven years.

In spite of this 'independence' martial law under British officers continued for a year and a half more. It was only ended after the Egyptian government had passed an Act of Indemnity, that is to say, a law freeing all officials of all liabilities for illegal acts committed by them during the martial law period.

The new 'independent' Egypt was presented with a most reactionary constitution with great powers in the hands of the king—king Fuad, who was imposed on the poor Egyptians. King Fuad and the British officials got on excellently together; they both disliked the nationalists, and they both objected to the idea of freedom for the people, or even of real parliamentary government. Fuad considered himself the government and did much as he pleased, dismissed parliament and ruled as a dictator, relying on British bayonets, which never failed him.

The first altruistic action of the British government after their declaration of Egyptian independence was to demand enormous sums as compensation for the officials who were retiring under the new régime. King Fuad, as the Egyptian government, readily agreed and the huge sum of £ 6,500,000 was thus paid out—one high official getting as much as £ 8,500. And the interesting part is that some of these officials, who were so heavily compensated for retirement, were immediately re-engaged under special contracts. Remember that Egypt is not a big country and it has a population of less than one-third that of the United Provinces.

The Egyptian constitution bravely lays down that "all power emanates from the nation". As a matter of fact ever since the new constitution came into force, the Egyptian parliament has had a very thin time. So far as I know (I am rather vague about recent happenings), not a single parliament has lived to the end of its normal term. Again and again it has met with sudden death at the hands of king Fuad, who has suspended the constitution and ruled as an autocratic monarch.

The first elections to the new parliament were held in 1923 and Zaghlul Pasha and his party, now known as the Wafd Party, swept the country. They gained ninety per cent. of the votes and 177 out of 214 seats. An effort was made to come to terms with England, Zaghlul going to London for the purpose. The two view points could not be reconciled and the negotiations broke down over several questions, one of these being that of the Sudan. The Sudan is a country south of Egypt; it is very different from Egypt; the people are different, and so is the language. Through the Sudan flows the Nile in its upper regions. Now the river Nile has been from the beginning of recorded history in Egypt, and that means seven or eight thousand years, the life-blood of Egypt. The whole of Egyptian agriculture and life has revolved round the annual Nile floods which brought the rich soil from the highlands of Abyssinia and thus converted a desert into a rich and fertile land. Lord Milner (of the commission that was boycotted) wrote about the Nile as follows:—

"It is an uncomfortable thought that the regular supply of water by the great river, which is to Egypt not a question of convenience and prosperity, but of life, must always be exposed to some risks as long as the upper reaches of the river are not under Egyptian control."

The upper reaches of the Nile are in the Sudan; hence the vital importance of the Sudan to Egypt.

In the past the Sudan was supposed to be under the joint control of England and Egypt. It was called

the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, and is so called still in most of the maps and atlases. As Britain was actually ruling Egypt, there was no conflict of interests, and a great deal of Egyptian money was spent in the Sudan. Indeed it was stated in the British Parliament by Lord Curzon in 1924 that the Sudan would be bankrupt if it was not for the financial expenditure undertaken by Egypt. When the question of leaving Egypt had at last to be faced by the British, they wanted to hold on to the Sudan. The Egyptians, on the other hand, felt that their existence was bound up with the control of the upper waters of the Nile in the Sudan. Hence the conflict of interests.

In 1924 when the question of the Sudan was being discussed between Saad Zaghlul and the British government, the Sudanese people showed their attachment to Egypt in many ways. For this they were severely sat upon by the British, who did just what they liked without consulting the Egyptian government, in spite of the joint administration, for which Egypt had to pay a good deal.

Another reservation made by Britain in the so-called declaration of Egyptian independence was the protection of foreign interests. What were these foreign interests? I have told you something about them in a previous letter. When the Turkish Empire was weakening the great Powers had imposed various rules on it under which special treatment was to be given to their citizens in Turkey. These European foreigners were not to be subject to Turkish laws or courts, whatever offence they might commit. They were to be tried by their own consuls or diplomatic representatives, or by special courts consisting of foreigners. They had other privileges also such as freedom from most kinds of taxation. These special and very valuable privileges of the foreigners were called 'capitulations' from capitulate, to surrender, as they were, to some extent, surrenders of sovereignty by the state concerned. Because Turkey had to put up with them, the various

parts of the Turkish dominions had also to submit to them. Egypt, which was wholly under British rule and where Turkey did not even possess nominal authority, was however in this respect made to suffer as a part of the Turkish empire, and the capitulations were enforced there. Under these most fortunate conditions for them, important foreign settlements of businessmen and capitalists grew up in the cities. It was natural enough that they should oppose the abolition of a system which protected them in every way and allowed them to grow fat and prosperous without having to pay taxes even. There were the foreign vested interest which the British government had undertaken to protect. Egypt could not possibly agree to a system which not only was wholly inconsistent with independence, but meant a tremendous loss of revenue to her. It was hardly possible to do anything on a big scale in the way of reform in social conditions if the richest people escaped taxation. During the long period of direct British rule, they had practically done nothing for primary education or the sanitation and improvement of village conditions.

It so happened that Turkey, which had been the original cause of the capitulations got rid of them after Kemal Pasha's victory, but Egypt still carries on with them under British protection. I might mention here that China is also still struggling with something similar to these capitulations. Japan had them also for a short while in the nineteenth century, but as soon as she became powerful she rejected them.

Thus the question of foreign vested interests was another stumbling block in the way of a settlement between Britain and Egypt. Vested interests are always in the way of freedom.

With their usual magnanimity the British government had also decided to protect the interests of minorities, and this was also a reservation in the declaration of independence of February, 1922. The chief minority was that of the Copts. These people are

supposed to be the descendants of the ancient Egyptians and are thus the most native of all Egyptians. They are Christians, and have been so from the early days of Christianity before Europe became Christian. Instead of thanking the British government for their great solicitude for the minorities, the Copts were ungrateful enough to tell them not to trouble about them. Soon after the British declaration of February, 1922, the Copts gathered together at a great meeting and resolved "that they renounce all minority representation and minority protection in the interest of national unity and the attainment of the national aim". This decision of the Copts was criticised by the British as a very foolish one! But, wise or foolish, it put an end to the British claim to protect them, and the question of minorities ceased to be a subject for discussion. As a matter of fact the Copts took a great part in the national struggle for freedom and some of Zaghlul Pasha's most trusted colleagues in the *Wafd* were Copts.

Because of these opposing view points and the actual conflicts of interests, the negotiations between Egypt, as represented by Saad Zaghlul and his colleagues, and the British, in 1924, broke down. The British government was very angry at this. They were used to having their way in Egypt and found the obstinacy of the new parliament in Cairo, and especially of the *Wafd* leaders, most irritating. Evidently they decided to teach a lesson, after their own imperialist manner, to the *Wafd* and the Egyptian parliament. An opportunity came to them soon, and of the extraordinary way in which they seized it and profited by it, I shall tell you in my next letter. That remarkable incident, holding up, as it were, a mirror to the working of modern imperialism, deserves a letter to itself.

WHAT INDEPENDENCE UNDER THE BRITISH MEANS

May 22, 1933

I told you in my last letter of the failure of the negotiations in 1924 between the Egyptian government, as represented by the nationalists, and the British, and the anger of the British government at this. Before I proceed to the remarkable developments that followed, I must remind you that in spite of so-called independence Egypt continued to be under British military occupation. Not only was the British army stationed there, but the Egyptian army was also under British control and had an Englishman, with the title of the Sirdar of the Army, at its head. The chief police officials were also Englishmen, and, under the plea of protecting foreigners in Egypt, the British government controlled the departments of Finance, Justice and the Interior; that is to say, they controlled every vital thing in the government. The Egyptians were naturally insisting on the British giving up this control.

On November 19, 1924, an Englishman, Sir Lee Stock, who held the office of Sirdar of the Egyptian Army and was also the governor-general of the Sudan, was murdered by some Egyptians. Naturally this gave a shock to the British people in Egypt and in England; perhaps it gave an even greater shock to the leaders of the Egyptian nationalist party, the *Wafd*, for they knew that it would mean an attack on them. This attack came swiftly enough. Within three days, on November 22, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, Lord Allenby, presented an ultimatum to the Egyptian government, making the following immediate demands:

1. An apology.
2. The punishment of the criminals.

3. Prohibition of all political demonstrations.
4. Payment of an indemnity of £ 500,000.
5. Withdrawal within twenty-four hours of all Egyptian troops from the Sudan.
6. The removal of the limitations that had, in the interest of Egypt, been placed on the area to be irrigated in the Sudan.
7. Withdrawal of all further opposition to the assumption by the British Government of the right to protect all foreigners in Egypt. This specially referred to the retention of British authority in the departments of Finance, Justice and Interior.

These seven demands are worthy of some attention. Because some people had murdered Sir Lee Stock, the British government immediately, and without even the possibility of an enquiry, treated the Egyptian government as a whole, that is the Egyptian people, as if they had been guilty of the murder. Further they made a handsome financial profit out of the whole affair, and, most significant of all, made it the occasion to settle forcibly all the matters in dispute between themselves and the Egyptian government, over which the negotiations had broken down in London only a few months before. As if this was not enough, they added that all political demonstrations should be prohibited, thus preventing even the normal public life of the country to continue.

Now all this was rather an extraordinary development out of the murder, and it required a vigorous and fertile imagination to make a murder yield so much profit to the British. What makes it still more curious was that the two chief officials (nominally under the Egyptian government) who might have been considered especially responsible for the prevention of crime and outrage, the chief of Police of Cairo and the Director-General of the European Department of Public Safety, were both Englishmen. No one considered them responsible for the murder. But the poor Egyptian government, which had immediately after the murder expressed its deep sorrow and regret, was made to feel

the heavy, but coldly calculated and profitable, anger of the British government.

The Egyptian government humbled itself to the dust. Zaghlul Pasha agreed to nearly all the conditions of the ultimatum, and even paid up the indemnity of £500,000 within 24 hours. Only about the Sudan the Egyptian government said it could not waive its rights. Even this humility and apology were not enough for Lord Allenby and, because the Sudan conditions had not been accepted, he took forcible possession, on behalf of the British, of the customs house at Alexandria, thereby controlling the customs revenue. Further, in spite of Egyptian protests, he enforced these conditions in the Sudan and made the Sudan a British colony. There were revolts of the Egyptian troops in the Sudan, but they were suppressed with extreme severity.

Zaghlul Pasha and his government had immediately resigned as a protest against the British action and, also in that very month of November, 1924, king Fuad dissolved parliament. So the British had succeeded in driving out Zaghlul and his *Wafd* party from office and in putting an end to parliament for the time being at least. They had also annexed the Sudan, and were thus in easy position to strangle Egypt's throat by controlling the waters of the Nile in the Sudan.

The unhappy Egyptian parliament had appealed to the League of Nations against "the exploitation of a tragic incident for imperialist purposes", but the League is blind and deaf to complaints against the great powers.

From this time onwards to the present day there has been a continuous struggle in Egypt, a tussle between the *Wafd* party, practically representing the whole nation, on the one side, and a combination of king Fuad and the British High Commissioner, backed by the other foreign interests and the hangers-on of the court, on the other. Most of the time the country has been ruled, in defiance of the constitution, by dictatorships, king Fuad acting as an autocratic monarch. Whenever parliament has been allowed to meet it has immediately

shown that nearly the whole country stood behind the *Wafd* party, and so it has been dissolved. Fuad could not possibly act in this way if he did not have the backing of the British and the army and police under their control. Egypt, the 'independent', is treated more or less like an Indian state with the British resident, the real authority pulling the strings.

Parliament had been dissolved in November, 1924. In March, 1925, the new parliament met. This had a big *Wafd* majority, and it immediately elected Zaghlul Pasha the president of the chamber of Deputies. Neither the English nor king Fuad approved of this and so on that very day, this brand new, one day old parliament was dissolved! For a whole year after this there was no parliament, in spite of the constitution, and Fuad governed as a dictator, the real power behind him being the British Commissioner. The whole country resented this and Saad Zaghlul succeeded in uniting all groups to oppose the combination of king Fuad and the English. In November, 1925, there was even a meeting of the members of parliament in defiance of the government prohibition. The parliament house itself was occupied by troops. So the members met elsewhere.

Fuad then tried to change the whole constitution by just issuing a decree from his palace. His object was to make it still more conservative so that future parliaments might be easier to control and most of the Zaghlulists might be kept out. But there was a tremendous outcry against this and it was clear that elections under the new system would be wholly boycotted. Thereupon king Fuad had to give way and elections were held under the old system. Result: vast majority for Zaghlul's party—200 to 14! There could not have been a greater proof of Zaghlul's hold on the nation and of what Egypt wanted. In spite of this the British Commissioner (who was Lord Lloyd, an ex-Indian governor) said he objected to Zaghlul becoming prime minister and another person was, therefore, appointed. What business the English had to interfere

in the matter it is a little difficult to understand. The new government was, however, largely controlled by Zaghlul's party and, in spite of all attempts at moderation, they often came into conflict with Lloyd, who was a most imperious and domineering individual, and who often threatened them with British warships.

‘ Another attempt was made in 1927 to come to an agreement with Britain, but even the very moderate prime minister of king Fuad was surprised at Britain's conditions. Under cover of a paper independence they really meant a British protectorate. So the negotiations again failed. ’

While these negotiations were going on, Egypt's great leader, Saad Zaghlul Pasha, died on August 23, 1927, at the age of seventy. He died, but his memory lives in Egypt as a bright and precious heritage, and inspires the people. His wife, Madame Safia Zaghlul, is still living, loved and revered by the entire nation, which has given her the title of the “mother of the people”. And his house in Cairo, the *Peoples' House* it is called, has long been the headquarters of the Egyptian nationalists.

Mustafa Nahas Pasha succeeded Zaghlul as the leader of the *Wafd*. Later, in March, 1928, he became prime minister. He tried to bring in some simple domestic reforms concerning civil liberties and the right of people to possess arms. These rights had been curtailed by the British during the martial law period. As soon as the Egyptian parliament began considering this question, there came threats from England that this must not be done. It seems extraordinary that England should thus intervene in a purely domestic matter; but Lord Lloyd, in the approved old fashion, presented an ultimatum, and British warships steamed into Alexandria harbour from Malta. Nahas Pasha gave way to some extent and agreed to postpone consideration of the measures to the next session, a few months later.

But there was to be no next session. The king and the British Commissioner, reaction and imperialism, saw

to it that the parliament should be given no further chance to misbehave. The intrigue worked out in a novel way. Nahas Pasha was especially noted for his high character and his incorruptibility. Suddenly on the basis of a letter (which later turned out to be forged) a charge of corruption was brought against Nahas Pasha and a Coptic leader of the *Wafd*. There was tremendous propaganda by court circles and by the British. Not only in Egypt but in foreign countries, British agencies and newspaper correspondents spread these false accusations. Under cover of this charge king Fuad asked Nahas Pasha to resign from the premiership. He refused to do so, and thereupon he was dismissed by Fuad. The next step in the Lloyd-Fuad intrigue was now taken. There was a *coup d'état*, and by a decree the king suspended parliament and altered the constitution. The articles in the constitution dealing with the freedom of the press and other liberties were abolished and a dictatorship was proclaimed. There were rejoicings in the English press and among the Europeans in Egypt!

The members of parliament met together, in spite of the dictatorship, and declared the new government illegal, but Lloyd or Fuad were not worried about such matters. The function of 'law and order' is to support reaction and imperialism, not to be used as a weapon against them.

The case brought by the government against Nahas Pasha collapsed in spite of government pressure. The charges against him were held to be false. And the government (how amazingly fair and chivalrous it was!) issued orders forbidding the publication of the judgment in the press. But of course the news spread immediately and everywhere there was great joy.

The dictatorship, backed by Lloyd and the British forces, tried hard to crush and break up the *Wafd* party, which meant Egyptian nationalism. There was a regular terror and a complete censorship of news. In spite of this, great national demonstrations took place in which the women took a special part. There was

a week's strike or *hartal*, the lawyers and others taking part in it, but owing to the censorship the press could not even report this!

So the year 1928 passed in storm and stress. Towards the end of the year a change in the political situation in England had its immediate reaction in Egypt. A Labour government had come into office there, and one of the first steps it took was to recall Lloyd, who had become insufferable, even to the British government. Lloyd's removal broke up for a while the Fuad-English alliance. Without English support Fuad could not carry on, and so he allowed fresh elections to parliament in December, 1928. Again the *Wafd* party captured nearly all the seats.

The English Labour government started negotiations again with Egypt and Nahas Pasha went to London in 1929 for this purpose. The Labour government went a little further this time than its predecessors and Nahas Pasha's view point on the three of the reservations was accepted. But on the fourth—the Sudan—again there was no agreement, and so the negotiations broke down. On this occasion, however, there had been far greater agreement than before; and the parties remained friendly to each other, and promised to have discussions again. This was on the whole a success for Nahas Pasha and the *Wafd*, and the British and other foreign businessmen and financiers in Egypt did not fancy it at all. Neither did king Fuad. A few months later, in June, 1930, there was a conflict between the king and parliament, and Nahas Pasha resigned from the premiership.

Fuad again stepped into the breach with a dictatorship—the third dictatorship of his reign. Parliament was dissolved, the *Wafd* newspapers suspended and generally the dictatorship began to function with a heavy hand. All the members of parliament, of both houses, the Chamber and the Senate, defied government, and forcing their way into the parliament house, held a session there. Solemnly they took the oath there, on

June 23, 1930, of loyalty to the constitution and they swore that they would defend it with all their strength. Great demonstrations were held all over the country. These were forcibly broken up by the troops, and a good deal of blood was shed. Nahas Pasha himself was injured. In this way the troops and police under British officers upheld a dictatorship which was bitterly resented by the whole nation, excepting a handful of aristocrats and rich men who clung to the king. Even others besides the Wafdists, even the moderates and liberals, who, as in India, proclaimed their opposition to all strong action on behalf of the people, even they protested against the dictatorship.

Later in the same year, 1930, the king published a decree proclaiming a new constitution, in which he cut down the powers of parliament and increased his own! It was so easy to do this kind of thing. Just issue a proclamation and it was done, for behind the king was the grim shadow of an imperialist power.

I have told you the story of these nine years in Egypt, from 1922 to 1930, in some detail, because it has seemed to me to be an extraordinary story. These were the years of Egypt's 'independence' according to the British declaration of February, 1922. There could be no question of what the Egyptian people wanted. Whenever they were given the chance the vast majority of them, Muslims and Copts, elected the Wafdists. But because what they wanted was to lessen the power of foreigners, and especially the British, to exploit the country, all these foreign vested interests opposed them in every way, by force and violence, by fraud and intrigue, and put up a puppet king to do their bidding.

The *Wafd* movement has been a purely nationalist bourgeois movement. It was fought for national independence, and has not interfered with social problems. Whenever parliament has functioned it has done some good work in educational and other departments. Indeed, in spite of the national struggle, parliament did more in this brief period than the English

administration had done in the previous forty years. The *Wafd* is popular with the peasantry, as is shown by the elections and by the great demonstrations. And yet, as the movement is essentially a middle class one, it has not aroused the masses to the extent that a movement aiming at social change would do.

I have brought this story down to the end of 1930. The conflict between the nationalists and the court continued afterwards also, but I do not know exactly what has taken place during the last two years. There has hardly been any mention of Egypt in the newspapers during this period that I have been in prison. Presumably this means that the dictatorship is functioning, and with it of course its inseparable ally, the censorship. The fact that the Conservatives, who pride themselves on their imperialism, are in power in England, means an aggressive British policy in Egypt. Under these circumstances king Fuad can go ahead merrily for the present without troubling himself about the unhappy Egyptian people.

Before I end this letter I must tell you of the women's movement. All over the Arab countries, except probably Arabia itself, there has been a great awakening of women. Egypt is in this, as in many other matters, more advanced than Iraq or Syria or Palestine. But in all these countries there is an organised women's movement, and in July, 1930, the first Arab Women's Congress met at Damascus. They laid stress more on cultural and social progress than on political matters. They proclaimed an Arab swadeshism. In Egypt women are more politically inclined. They take part in political demonstrations, and have a strong Women Suffrage Union. They claim a reform of the marriage law in their own favour, and equal opportunities for women in professions, etc. Muslim and Christian women co-operate with each other fully. The habit of veiling is lessening everywhere, more specially in Egypt. The veil has not disappeared as in Turkey, but it is going to pieces.

WESTERN ASIA RE-ENTERS WORLD POLITICS

May 25, 1933

Only a tiny strip of blue separates Egypt and Africa from Western Asia. Let us cross this Suez Canal and visit Arabia and Palestine and Syria and Iraq—all Arab countries—and, a little beyond them, Persia. Western Asia, as we have seen, has played a mighty part in history and has often been the pivot of world affairs. And then there came a period, lasting several hundred years, when politically it retired to the background. It became a backwater, and the current of life rushed by, hardly creating a ripple on its still surface. And now we are witnesses of yet another change which is bringing the countries of the middle East again into world affairs; again the highway between East and West passes through them. This is a fact which deserves our attention.

Whenever I think of Western Asia I am apt to lose myself in the past; so many images of the old days crowd in my mind and I find it difficult to resist their fascination. I shall try not to give in to this attraction, but I must remind you again—lest you forget!—of the importance, for many thousands of years from the very beginning of history, of this part of the earth's surface. Old Chaldea dimly appears in history seven thousand years ago. (This corresponds to modern Iraq.) And then comes Babylon, and after the Babylonians appear the cruel Assyrians with their great capital at Nineveh. The Assyrians are in their turn pushed away and a new dynasty and a new people, coming from Persia, impose their will on the whole of the Middle East from the Indian frontier to Egypt. These were the Achaemenids

of Persia with their capital at Persepolis. They produced the 'Great Kings' Cyrus and Darius and Xerxes who threatened little Greece but failed to overcome her. They met their fate later at the hands of a son of Greece, or rather of Macedonia, Alexander. A curious incident took place in Alexander's career when, in this meeting place of Asia and Europe, he planned, what has been called, a 'marriage' of the two continents. He married the daughter of the Persian King himself (although he had a few wives already) and thousands of his officers and soldiers also married Persian girls.

After Alexander, Greek culture prevailed in the middle East from the Indian frontier to Egypt for many centuries. The power of Rome arose during this period and it spread towards Asia. It found a check in a new Persian Empire, that of the Sassanids. The Eastern Empire itself split up into two, the Western and the Eastern Empire, and Constantinople came to be the seat of the latter. The old struggle between East and West continued on these plains of Western Asia and the chief combatants were the Byzantine empire of Constantinople and the Persian Sassanid Empire. And all this time great caravans of people, carrying merchandise on the backs of camels, crossed these plains from East to West and West to East, for the Middle East was then one of the world's great highways.

Three great religions had seen the light of day in these lands of Western Asia—Judaism (that is the religion of the Jews), Zoroastrianism (the religion of the modern Parsees), and Christianity. A fourth now appeared in the deserts of Arabia and soon it dominated the other three in this part of the world. Then we have the Arab Empire of Baghdad and a new form of the old struggle—Arabs against Byzantine. After a long and brilliant career, Arab civilization wanes before the coming of the Seljuk Turks, and is finally crushed by the successors of Chengiz Khan, the Mongol.

(But before the Mongols came west a fierce struggle had already commenced on the western coasts of Asia

between the Christian west and the Muslim east. These were the Crusades which lasted, off and on, for two hundred and fifty years, almost to the middle of the thirteenth century.) These Crusades are looked upon as wars of religion, and so they were. But religion was more of an excuse for the wars than a cause. The people of Europe in those days were backward as compared to the East. These were the Dark Ages of Europe. But Europe was waking up and the more advanced and cultured East drew it like magnet. This pull towards the East took many shapes, and among these the Crusades were the most important. As a result of these wars Europe learnt much from the western Asiatic countries. She learnt many fine arts and crafts and habits of luxury, and, what was more important, methods of scientific work and thought.

The Crusades were hardly over when the Mongols swept down on Western Asia bringing destruction in their train. And yet we must not think of the Mongols just as destroyers. Their vast movements from China to Russia brought together distant peoples and encouraged trade and intercourse. Under their huge empire the old caravan routes became safe to travel by, and not only merchants but diplomatists, religious missionaries and others went up and down them on their tremendous journeys. The middle East was in the direct line of these ancient world highways; it was the link between Asia and Europe.

It was in the days of the Mongols, you will perhaps remember, that Marco Polo went from his native Venice all the way across Asia to China. We happen to possess a book written, or rather dictated, by him giving an account of his travels and that is why we remember him. But many other people must have undertaken these long journeys without taking the trouble to write about them and, even if they wrote, their books may have perished, for those were the days of manuscript books. Caravans were continually passing from country to country, and though the main business was

trade, many a man accompanied them in search of fortune and adventure. One great traveller of the old days stands out like Marco Polo. This was Ibn Battuta, an Arab born early in the fourteenth century in Tangier in Morocco. He thus came just a generation after Marco Polo. I think I have mentioned his name somewhere in the course of my letters to you. At that time I had not read the book of his travels. I have recently read this book and, as I did so, I marvelled at his amazing love of travel, his *wanderlust*, as the Germans say. As a young man of twenty-one he marched out on his tremendous journey into the wide world, carrying little with him except his wits and the education of a Muslim *Qazi* or religious judge. From Morocco, right across North Africa, he travelled to Egypt, and then to Arabia and Syria and Persia; then he goes to Anatolia (Turkey); and South Russia (under the Mongol Khans of the Golden Horde), and Constantinople (still the capital of Byzantium), and Central Asia, and India. He crossed India from north to south, goes to Malabar and Ceylon, and then to China. On his return he wanders about Africa and even crosses the Sahara desert! This is a record of travel which is rare enough to-day with our many conveniences. It is an amazing eye-opener for the first half of the fourteenth century and it shows us how common travelling was in those days. In any event Ibn Battuta must be numbered amongst the great travellers of all time.

Ibn Battuta's book contains delightful observations about the people and countries he visited. Egypt was rich then because the whole of the Indian trade with the west passed through it, and this was a very profitable business. These profits went to make Cairo into a great city with beautiful monuments. Ibn Battuta tells us of caste in India, of *Sati*, and of the customs of offering *pān-supārī*! We learn from him of Indian merchants carrying on a brisk trade in foreign ports, and Indian ships on the seas. He is particular to notice and to note down where he found beautiful women, and the manner

of their dress and scents and ornaments. He describes the city of Delhi as "the metropolis of India, a vast and magnificent city, uniting beauty with strength." Those were the days of the mad Sultan Mohammad Tughlaq who, in a fit of anger, transferred his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad in the south, and thus converted this 'vast and magnificent city' into a desert "empty and unpopulated, save for a few inhabitants" and even these few inhabitants had crept in long afterwards.

I have managed to get swept away a little by Ibn Battuta. These travel stories of old days fascinate me.

So we see that upto the fourteenth century the middle East, or Western Asia, played a great part in world affairs and was the main link between East and West. The next hundred years saw a change. The Ottoman Turks took possession of Constantinople and spread all over these countries of the middle East, including Egypt. They did not encourage continental trade, partly because this trade was in the hands of their rivals in the Mediterranean, the Viennese and the Genoese. Trade itself took to new ways for new sea routes were opened out, and these sea routes took the place of the old land caravan routes. So these land routes across Western Asia, which had done good service for many thousands of year, fell into disuse, and the lands through which they had passed shifted away from the centre of the stage.

For nearly four hundred years, from early in the sixteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century, the sea routes were all important and they dominated the land routes, especially where there were no railways, and there were no railways in Western Asia. A little before the World War proposals were made, backed by the German government, for a railway connecting Constantinople with Baghdad. The other Powers were very jealous of Germany doing this as it would have led to the increase of German influence in the middle East. The war intervened.

When the war ended in 1918, Britain was supreme

in Western Asia and, as I have told you, for a brief while visions of a great middle Eastern Empire, from India to Turkey, floated before the dazzled eyes of British statesmen. That was not to be. Bolshevik Russia and Kemal Pasha and other factors prevented its realisation, but still Britain managed to hold on to a good bit. Iraq and Palestine are under British control (although Iraq, like Egypt, is supposed to be independent); Syria is under the French; Persia and Arabia are more or less independent countries. So that although the British were unable to realise their vast ambitions, they succeeded in holding on to their old policy of controlling the routes and approaches to India. It was with this object that British armies fought during war time in Mesopotamia and Palestine, and encouraged and helped the Arab revolt against Turkey. It was because of this that great friction arose between England and Turkey over the Mosul question after the war. And this is one of the chief reasons for the bad blood between England and Soviet Russia, for England hates the idea of a great Power like Russia sitting on the garden wall, overlooking the road to India.

The two railways about which there was so much dispute before the war—the Baghdad Railway and the Hejaz Railway—have now been built. The Baghdad railway connects Baghdad with the Mediterranean Sea and Europe. The Hejaz Railway connects Medina in Arabia to the Baghdad Railway at Aleppo. (The Hejaz is the most important part of Arabia containing the holy cities of Islam, Mecca and Medina). So that many important cities of Western Asia are now connected by the railway system to Europe and Egypt and are thus easily accessible. The city of Aleppo is developing into an important railway junction for the railway systems of three continents will meet there: the line from Europe, from Asia *via* Baghdad, and from Africa *via* Cairo. British policy has long aimed at controlling these routes in Asia and Africa. The Asiatic route, when extended from Baghdad, may

reach India. The African route is meant to go right across the African continent from Cairo to Cape Town in the far south. The all-red Cape to Cairo line has long been the dream of British imperialists, and it is well on the way to realisation now—'all-red' means that it should pass British territory along the whole route, as red is the colour on the map monopolised by the British Empire.

But these developments may or may not take place in the future, for the railway has got serious rivals now in the motor car and the aeroplane. It is also possible that the British Empire itself might go to pieces before these fine dreams come to fruition. Meanwhile it is worth remembering that both these two new railways in west Asia, the Baghdad and the Hejaz, are largely controlled by the British, and serve British policy in opening out a new and shorter route, under their control, to India. Part of the Baghdad railway passes through Syria, which is under French control. Not liking this dependence on the French, the British intend building a new line through Palestine to take its place. Another little railway is being built in Arabia between Jeddah, the port in the Red Sea, and Mecca. This will be a great convenience to the tens of thousands of pilgrims who go to Mecca every year.

So much for the railway system which is opening out these countries of west Asia to the world. And yet even before it has done its job, it is losing some of its importance and is being pushed aside by the motor car and the aeroplane. The motor car has taken very readily to the desert and rushes along the same old caravan routes along which trudged for thousands of years the patient camel. A railway is very costly, and it takes time to build. The motor is cheap and can function immediately whenever required. But motor cars and lorries do not usually serve long distances; they go backwards and forwards in comparatively small areas of a hundred miles at most.

For the great distances there is of course the

aeroplane. This is also cheaper than the railway and far swifter. It requires no tract or road. There can be no doubt that the use of aircraft will go on increasing rapidly for purposes of transport. Already giant progress has been made and huge air-liners go regularly from continent to continent. Western Asia again becomes a meeting place of these great air routes, and Baghdad is especially the centre of them. The British Imperial Airways have now a weekly service from London, across Europe, to Baghdad and then India. It stops at Karachi now, but is connected with air services to Delhi, and Bombay and Madras. It is proposed to extend it to Calcutta, Rangoon and Singapore, and from there to have one branch going to Hong Kong, and another to Australia.

Another proposed British air route (I am not sure if it is functioning now or not) is to Cairo from London and thence along East Africa to Cape Town. This will also cover almost wholly British territory. So you will notice that British air plans are magnificent in design. They cover the three continents, Europe, Asia, Africa, and also Australia. This becomes necessary for them because of their empire. In the past sea power was essential for them and they controlled the seas for a long time. Now sea power is of far less importance, and the safety from invasion of England as an Island cannot even be assured by sea power. For it is perfectly easy for aeroplanes to come across the seas and destroy the cities and factories by means of bombs. If England itself lives in danger of attack from air, much more so does a wide-spread empire. Hence the importance of air power. Each great Power is now keen on becoming strong in the air, and the old rivalry on the sea has given place to air rivalry. Peace-time passenger traffic by air is encouraged and subsidised by each country as this builds up a service of trained pilots who can be used in time of war. Civil aviation this is called, as opposed to military aviation, which concerns itself solely with fighting and bombing places.

As a matter of fact peace-time passenger planes can easily be fixed up for war purposes when a crisis comes.

Just as Britain has vast schemes for the development of civil aviation, so have the other imperialist powers. French air-liners go from Paris—Marseilles—Beirut, and then to Baghdad, and from there to India, and to Saigon in Indo-China. The French have other air services across the Mediterranean and the Sahara desert. The Dutch have a regular service between Amsterdam (Holland) and Batavia in Java, passing Baghdad and India. I wonder if you have seen their giant planes at Bamrauli near Allahabad; for most of these great air services crossing India pass through Allahabad.

This letter is not meant to give a list of the various air services functioning in the world to-day. There are hundreds of such services now, and in Europe and in North America one can travel almost anywhere by air. I am here trying to draw your attention to the sudden importance of Western Asia as an area of air travel where many long-distance lines cross. You will notice how many air routes converge at Baghdad. There are some others which I have not mentioned, for instance, a line from Moscow to Baku and then Baghdad and Teheran in Persia. Because of these new developments Western Asia definitely re-enters world politics and becomes a pivot of inter-continental affairs. This means also that it becomes the scene of friction and conflict between the great Powers, for their ambitions clash and each tries to overreach the other. Even in the air they adopt a dog-in-the-manger policy, trying to prevent their rivals from flying over their territories. This phase of nationalism is sometimes called air nationalism. Thus the Iraq government, which means the British who control Iraq, refuses to allow the famous German aeroplane company, Junkers, to fly their machines over Iraq. The Persian government (which is more friendly to Junkers) thereupon refuses

to allow the British Imperial Airways to fly over their country. Sometimes these difficulties are adjusted by agreements, but the rivalry behind them continues.

The growing importance of air power and communications and at the same time the lessening importance of sea power, makes a great deal of difference to old methods of defence. As I have told you before, one of the great problems which has continuously worried England and round which her policy has revolved, has been the defence of her empire in India. She relied on sea power for this, and therefore ports and coaling stations, conveniently situated, were important for her, so that her navy could move about everywhere with ease. But if more reliance has got to be placed on the air routes then these coaling stations are not of so much use. Thus a port like Aden which was very important from the point of view of the defence of India in the days of the supremacy of sea power, loses this importance now with the coming of the aeroplane. What is required now are air-ports, that is big aerodromes and a plentiful supply of oil for the aeroplanes. If we keep this in mind we can understand a great deal of the policy which has shaped and is shaping British and other activities in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Mosul, besides being situated on this new high road to India, possesses oil. Iraq also possesses oil and, as we have seen, is the very heart of the air lines. It is thus easy to understand the great importance of controlling Iraq for the British. Persia possesses many oil fields and these have long been exploited by an English company, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, in which the British government have got many shares. This company's business is far the biggest thing in Persia and it dominates the country. I think I wrote to you in a previous letter of the conflict between the new and aggressive nationalism of Persia and this oil company, which means the British government. The Persian government put an end to the old concession on the ground that it was not fair to them. The matter was referred

to the League of Nations and a settlement has just been reached according to which Persia is giving a new contract to the company. Under this contract Persia will get a larger and a more fixed share in the profits.

The importance of oil, petrol, grows for it is used not only for aeroplanes and motor transport, but also by many of the sea-going ships. So oil plays a great part in the fashioning of imperialist policies, and it is a sticky, greasy and dirty part. Indeed modern imperialism has sometimes been called 'Oil Imperialism'.

We have considered in this letter some of the factors which have given a new prominence to the Middle East and brought it back into the whirlpool of world politics. But behind all this is the national awakening of the whole of the Asiatic East, and we must consider this, so far as it relates to Western Asia, in our next letter. Turkey we have also studied, and also Egypt. These two countries have set the pace for their neighbours in west Asia.

When reading this letter I hope you will have a map by you, or an atlas, which will show you the new railway lines and air routes. These have a special interest for us, as they are on our way from India to Europe, and it is quite possible that we may have to go by them some day. The old voyage by sea seems so slow and out of date now, does it not? and fascination lies in the call of the air.

THE ARAB COUNTRIES—SYRIA

May 28, 1933

We have seen what a powerful force nationalism has been in binding together and strengthening groups of people living in countries, usually with a common language and traditions. While this nationalism binds together one such group, it marks it off and separates it still further from other groups. Thus nationalism makes of France a strong solid national unit, closely bound together and looking on the rest of the world as something different; so also it makes the different German countries into one powerful German nation. But this very drawing together separately of France and Germany cuts them off from each other still more.

In a country which has several distinct national groups, nationalism is often a disruptive force which, instead of strengthening and binding together the country, actually weakens it and tends to break it up. The Austro-Hungarian Empire before the World War was such a country with many nationalities, of which two, the German-Austrians and the Hungarians, were the dominant ones, and the others were dependent. The growth of nationalism therefore weakened Austria-Hungary as it infused fresh life into each of these nationalities separately, and with this came the desire for freedom. The war made matters worse, and the country broke up into little bits when defeat followed the war, each national area forming a separate state. (The division was not a very happy or logical one, but we need not go into that here). Germany, on the other hand, in spite of a severe defeat did not break up into bits. It held together even in disaster under the

powerful stress of nationalism.

The Turkish Empire before the World War was, like Austria-Hungary, a collection of many nationalities. Apart from the Balkan races, there were the Arabs and the Armenians and others. Nationalism, therefore, proved a disruptive force in this empire also. The Balkans were first affected by it and, right through the nineteenth century, Turkey had to struggle with the Balkan races, one after the other, beginning with Greece. The great Powers, and especially Tsarist Russia, tried to profit by this awakening nationalism and intrigued with it. They also used the Armenians as a tool to hammer and weaken the Ottoman Empire, and hence the repeated conflicts between the Turkish government and the Armenians, resulting in bloody massacres. These Armenians were exploited and used for propaganda purposes by the great Powers, but after the World War, when there was no further use for them, they were left to their own fate. Later Armenia, which lies to the East of Turkey and touching the Black Sea, became a Soviet republic and joined the Russian Soviet Union.

The Arab parts of the Turkish dominions took more time to wake up, although there was little love lost between the Arabs and the Turks. At first there was a cultural awakening and a renaissance of the Arabic language and literature. This began in Syria, as early as the sixties of the nineteenth century, and spread to Egypt and other Arabic-speaking countries. Political movements grew up after the Young Turk revolution in Turkey in 1908 and the fall of Sultan Abdul Hamid. Nationalist ideas spread among the Arabs, both Muslim and Christian, and the idea of freeing the Arab countries from Turkish rule and uniting them in one state took shape. Egypt, though an Arabic-speaking country, was more or less apart politically, and was not expected to join this proposed Arab State which was meant to include Arabia, Syria, Palestine and Iraq. The Arabs also wanted to get back

the religious leadership of Islam by getting the Caliphate transferred from the Ottoman Sultan to an Arab dynasty. Even this was looked upon more as a national move, as redounding to the greater importance and glory of the Arabs, than as a religious one, and even the Syrian Christian Arabs were favourable to it.

Britain began intriguing with this Arab nationalist movement even before the World War. During the war all manner of promises were made about a great Arab kingdom and the Sherif Hussein of Mecca, with the hope of becoming a great ruler and the Caliph dangling before him, joined the British and raised an Arab rebellion against the Turks. Syrian Arabs, both Muslim and Christian, supported Hussein in his rebellion and many of their leaders paid for this with their lives, for the Turks sent them to the gallows. May 6, was the day of their execution in Damascus and Beirut and this day is still observed in Syria in memory of the national martyrs. >

The Arab revolt, subsidised by the British, and helped especially by a genius, the British mystery and secret service man Colonel Lawrence, succeeded. By the time the war ended, almost all the Arab dominions of the Turks were under British control. The Turkish Empire had gone to pieces. I have told you that Mustafa Kemal, in his fight for Turkey's independence, never aimed at the conquest of non-Turkish areas (except a part of Kurdistan). Very wisely he stuck to Turkey proper.

So after the war the future of these Arab countries had to be decided. The victorious Allies, or rather the British and the French governments, piously declared about these countries that their aim was "the complete and definite emancipation of the peoples so long oppressed by the Turks, and the establishment of national governments and administrations deriving their authority from the initiative and free-choice of the indigenous populations." These two governments proceeded to realise this noble aim by sharing among

themselves the greater part of these Arab areas. Mandates, the new way of acquiring territory by the imperialist powers, with the blessing of the League of Nations, were issued to France and England. France got Syria; England got Palestine and Iraq. The Hejaz, the most important part of Arabia, was put under Britain's protégé, the Sherif Hussein of Mecca. Thus, in spite of the promises made to create a single Arab state, these Arab territories were split up into separate areas under different mandates, with one state, the Hejaz, outwardly independent but really under the British. The Arabs were greatly disappointed at these partitions and they refused to accept them as final. But more surprises and disappointments were in store for them, for the old imperialist policy of division, in order to rule the more easily, was practised even within the limits of each mandate. It will be easier to consider each of these countries separately now. So I shall deal with the French mandate, Syria, first.

⁴Early in 1920 an Arab government under the Emir Feisal (son of king Hussein of the Hejaz) was set up in Syria with the help of the British. A Syrian National Congress met and adopted a democratic constitution for a united Syria. But all this was a few months' show only, and in the summer of 1920, the French, with the League of Nations mandate for Syria in their pocket, came and drove out Feisal and took forcible possession of the country. Syria, even taken as a whole, is a small country with a population of less than three millions. But it proved to be a hornets' nest for the French, for the Syrian Arabs, both Muslim and Christian, now that they had resolved on independence, refused to submit easily to the domination of another power. There was continuous trouble and local insurrections and a huge French army was required in Syria to carry on French rule. The French government then tried the usual tactics of imperialism and sought to weaken Syrian nationalism by dividing up the country into even smaller states and giving importance to religious and minority

differences. It was a deliberate policy, almost proclaimed officially, "to divide in order to rule".

Syria, small as it was, was now split up into five separate states. On the western sea coast and near the Lebanon mountains, the state of Lebanon was created. The majority of the population here consisted of a sect of Christians called the Maronites, and the French gave them a special status to win them over against the Syrian Arabs.

North of Lebanon, also along the coast, another little state was created in the mountains where some Muslim people, called the Alawis, lived. Further north still, a third state, Alexandretta, was established; this adjoined Turkey and was largely inhabited by Turkish-speaking people.

Thus Syria proper, as it now remained, was deprived of some of its most fertile districts and, what was much worse, completely cut off from the sea. For thousands of years Syria had been one of the great Mediterranean countries and now this ancient alliance was broken up and it had to face the inhospitable desert. Even from this Syria another mountainous bit was cut off and made into a separate state, the Jebel ed Druz, where a tribal people, the Druzes, lived.

From the very beginning the Syrians had not taken kindly to the French mandate. There had been conflicts and big demonstrations, in which Arab women had taken part, and the French had repressed these with a heavy hand. (The division of the country, and the deliberate attempt to raise religious and minority problems, made matters worse and dissatisfaction grew. To put this down the French, like the British in India, suppressed personal and political liberties and covered the country with their spies and secret service men.) They appointed as their officials 'loyal' Syrians who had no influence whatever with the people and who were generally regarded as renegades by their own countrymen. All this was done of course with the most pious of motives, and the French proclaimed that they considered it

"their duty to educate the Syrians to political maturity and independence"—the phrase has a familiar ring in India!

Matters were coming to a head, especially among the fighting and somewhat primitive people of the Jebel ed Druz (who are not unlike the tribes of our north-west frontier). The French governor played a dirty trick with the leaders of these Druzes. He invited them and then made them prisoners and kept them as hostages. This was in the summer of 1925 and immediately an insurrection broke out in the Jebel ed Druz. This local revolt spread all over the country and became a general rising for Syrian freedom and unity.

This war of Syrian independence was a remarkable affair. A small country, about the size of two or three districts in India, stood up to fight France, which was then the greatest military power in the world. Of course the Syrians could not fight pitched battles with the huge and well equipped French armies, but they made it difficult for them to hold the rural areas. Only the large towns were in French possession and even these were often raided by the Syrians. The French tried their utmost to terrorise the people by shooting down large numbers and burning down numerous villages. The famous old city of Damascus itself was bombarded and largely destroyed in October, 1925. The whole of Syria was a military camp. In spite of all this the rising was not put down for two years. It was crushed at last by the mighty French military machine, but the great sacrifices of the Syrians had not been in vain. They had established their right to freedom, and the world knew what stuff they were made of.

It is interesting to notice that while the French tried to give a religious colouring to the rising and tried to use the Christians against the Druzes, the Syrians made it quite clear that they fought for national freedom and not for a religious objective. Right at the beginning of the insurrection a provisional government was established in the Druz country and this government

issued a proclamation appealing to the people to join the war of independence and win "the complete independence of Syria, one and indivisible, the free election of a Constituent Assembly to draft the constitution, the withdrawal of foreign army of occupation, and the creation of a national army to guarantee security and apply the principles of the French Revolution and the Rights of Man". So the French government and the French army tried to put down a people who were standing up for the principles of the French Revolution and the rights which it had proclaimed!

(Early in 1928 martial law was ended in Syria; also the censorship of the press. Many political prisoners were released. In accordance with the demand of the nationalists, a Constituent Assembly was convened in order to draw up the constitution. But the French laid the seed of trouble by arranging for separate religious electorates (as in India now). Separate compartments were created for Muslims, Greek Catholics, Greek Orthodox Church, and Jews, and each voter was compelled to vote for one of his own religious group. A curious and revealing situation arose in Damascus. The leader of the nationalists was a Protestant Christian. Being a Protestant he did not fall into any of the special electorates and could not therefore be elected although he was one of the most popular men in Damascus. The Muslims, who had ten seats, offered to give up one seat, so that it might be given to the Protestants but the French government would not agree.)

In spite of all these attempts of the French the nationalists controlled the Constituent Assembly, and they drafted a constitution of an independent and sovereign state. Syria was to be a republic in which all authority was derived from the people. There was no reference in this draft constitution to the French or their mandate. The French protested at this but the Assembly would not budge an inch and a tussle went on for many months. At last the French High Commissioner suggested that the draft constitution should be

adopted with just one transitional clause to the effect that during the continuance of the mandate no article in the constitution should be applied so as to conflict with France's obligations under the mandate. This was rather vague, but still it was a great come down for the French. The Constituent Assembly, however, would not agree even to this. The French government thereupon, in May, 1930, dissolved this Assembly and at the same time proclaimed the constitution drafted by it, with the addition of their transitional clause.

So Syria proper had succeeded in obtaining much that it wanted and yet it had not compromised or given up a single one of its demands. Two things remained: the ending of the mandate, with which would go the transitional clause, and the larger question of Syrian unity. Otherwise the constitution itself which is functioning now is a very progressive one and designed for a perfectly free country. Syrians showed themselves brave and determined fighters during the great insurrection. They have shown themselves equally determined and persistent negotiators since, and they have refused to modify or qualify their demand for full freedom in any way. It appears from the news in the press that at last some agreement between the Syrian nationalists and the French government is in sight. Newspaper accounts are not to be trusted, but I give it to you for what it is worth. It sounds reasonable. The agreement is based on the French mandate ending over Syria proper, and the territories of the Alawis and the Druzes by the end of 1934 and for the union of these three areas. There will thus be one state, but the Alawis and Druzes will have a great deal of autonomy. Lebanon will, however, not join this state yet. It will remain under French protection for another twenty years when the people of the Lebanese Republic will decide, by voting on it, the question of their union with Syria.

PALESTINE AND TRANS-JORDAN

May 29, 1933

Adjoining Syria is Palestine, for which the British government holds a mandate from the League of Nations. This is an even smaller country, with a total population of less than a million, but it attracts a great deal of attention because of its old history and associations. For it is a holy land for the Jews as well as Christians and, to some extent, even the Muslims. The people inhabiting it are predominantly Muslim Arabs, and they demand freedom and unity with their fellow Arabs of Syria. But British policy has created a special minority problem here—that of the Jews—and the Jews side with the British and oppose the freedom of Palestine as they fear this would mean Arab rule. The two full different ways and conflicts necessarily occur. On the Arab side are numbers, on the other side great financial resources and the world-wide organisation of Jewry. So England pits Jewish religious nationalism against Arab nationalism, and makes it appear that her presence is necessary to act as an arbitrator and to keep the peace between the two. It is the same old game which we have seen in other countries under imperialist domination; it is curious how often it is repeated.

The Jews are a very remarkable people. (Originally they were a small tribe, or several tribes, in Palestine, and their early story is told in the Old Testament of the Bible) Rather conceited they were, thinking themselves the Chosen People. But this is a conceit in which nearly all people have indulged. They were repeatedly conquered and suppressed and enslaved, and some of the

most beautiful and moving poems in English are the songs and laments of these Jews as given in the authorised translation of the Bible. I suppose in the original Hebrew they are equally, or even more, beautiful. I shall give you just a few lines from one of the Psalms:—

By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept: when
we remembered thee, O Sion.

As for our harps we hanged them up: upon the trees that
are therein.

For they that led us away captive required of us then a
song, and melody, in our heaviness: Sing us one
of the songs of Sion.

How shall we sing the Lord's song: in a strange land?

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem: let my right hand forget
her cunning.

If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the
roof of my mouth: yea, if I prefer not Jerusalem
in my mirth.

These Jews were finally dispersed all over the world. They had no home or nation, and everywhere they went, they were treated as unwelcome and undesirable strangers. They were made to live in special areas of cities, apart from the others—'ghettos' these areas were called—so that they might not pollute others. Sometimes they were made to put on a special dress. They were humiliated, reviled, tortured and massacred; the very word 'Jew' became a word of abuse, a synonym for a miser and a grasping money-lender. And yet these amazing people not only survived all this but managed to keep their racial and cultured characteristics, and prospered and produced a host of great men. To-day they hold leading positions as scientists, statesmen, literary men, financiers, businessmen, and even the greatest socialists and communists have been Jews. Most of them of course are far from prosperous; they crowd in the cities of eastern Europe and, from time to time, suffer 'pogrows' or massacres. These people without home or country, and especially the poor among them, have never ceased to dream of old Jerusalem, which appears to their imaginations greater and more magnificent than it ever

was in fact. Zion they call Jerusalem, a kind of promised land, and Zionism is this call of the past which pulls them to Jerusalem and Palestine.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century this Zionist movement took gradual shape as a colonising movement and many Jews went to settle in Palestine. There was also a renaissance of the Hebrew language. During the World War the British armies invaded Palestine and, as they were marching on Jerusalem, the British government made a declaration in November, 1917, called the Balfour Declaration. They declared that it was their intention to establish a "Jewish National Home" in Palestine. Perhaps this declaration was made to win the good-will of international Jewry, and this was important from the money point of view. It was welcomed by Jews. But there was one little drawback, one not unimportant fact seems to have been overlooked. Palestine was not a wilderness, or an empty uninhabited place. It was already somebody's home. So that this generous gesture of the British government was really at the expense of the people who already lived in Palestine and these people, including Arabs, non-Arabs, Muslims, Christians, and, in fact, everybody who was not a Jew, protested vigorously at the declaration. It was really an economic question. These people felt that the Jews would compete with them in all activities and, with the great wealth behind them, would become the economic masters of the country; they were afraid that the Jews would take the bread out of their mouths and the land from the peasantry.

The story of Palestine during the last dozen years has been one of conflict between Arabs and Jews, with the British government siding with one or the other, as occasion demanded, but generally supporting the Jews. The country has been treated as a British colony with no self-government. The Arabs, supported by the Christians and other non-Jewish peoples, have demanded self-determination and complete freedom. They have taken strong objection to the mandate and to fresh immigrants

on the ground that there is no room for more. As Jewish immigrants have poured in, their fear and anger have increased. They (the Arabs) have declared that "Zionism had been an accomplice of British imperialism; responsible Zionist leaders had constantly urged what an advantage a strong Jewish National Home would be to the English in guarding the road to India, just because it was a counter-acting force to Arab national aspirations". How India crops up in odd places!

The Arab Congress decided to non-cooperate with the British government and to boycott the elections to a Legislative Council which the British were putting. This boycott was very successful, and the Council could not be formed. The policy of non-cooperation of a kind lasted for several years; then it weakened to some extent and some groups gave partial co-operation to the British. Even so the British could not get an elective council and the High Commissioner governed as an all powerful Sultan.

In 1928 the different Arab groups again united in the Arab Congress and demanded a democratic parliamentary system of government "as of right". They further very bravely stated that "the people of Palestine cannot and will not tolerate the present absolute colonial system of government." An interesting feature of this new wave of Arab nationalism was the stress laid on economic questions. This is always a sign of a growing appreciation of the realities of the situation.

In August, 1929, there were big Arab-Jew riots. The real cause was Arab bitterness and fear due to the growing wealth and numbers of the Jews, as well as the Jewish opposition to Arab demands for freedom. The immediate cause however was a dispute about the "Wailing Wall", as it is called. This is part of the old wall which surrounded Herod's temple in old times, and is thus sacred to the Jews who look upon it as a monument of the days when they were a great people. Subsequently a mosque was built there, and this wall was made part of the structure. The Jews say their prayers near

this wall and, especially, recite their lamentations in a loud voice—hence the name the 'Wailing Wall'. The Muslims object to this practice on a part of one of their most famous mosques.

After the riots were put down, the struggle continued in other ways, and the curious part of it is that the Arabs had the full support of all Christian churches in Palestine. Both Muslims and Christians thus joined together in great strikes (*hartals*) and demonstrations. Even women took a prominent part. This shows that the real trouble was not religious but economic conflict between the new-comers and the old residents. The League of Nations strongly criticised the British administration for its failure to fulfil its mandatory duties and especially for having failed to prevent the riots of 1929.

So Palestine continues to be practically a British Colony, and in some ways worse even than a full-fledged colony, and the British are continuing this state of affairs by playing the Jew against the Arab. It is full of British officials, and all the high posts are occupied by them. As usual with British dependencies very little has been done for education, in spite of the strong desire of the Arabs for education. The Jews, with their great financial resources, have fine schools and colleges. The Jewish population is already nearly a quarter of the Muslim population and their economic power is far greater. They seem to look forward to the day when they will be the dominant community in Palestine. The Arabs tried to gain their co-operation in the struggle for national freedom and democratic government but they rejected these advances. They have preferred taking sides with the foreign ruling power and have thus helped it to keep back freedom from the majority of the people. It is not surprising that this majority, comprising the Arabs chiefly and also the Christians, bitterly resent this attitude of the Jews.

TRANS-JORDAN

Adjoining Palestine, across the river Jordan, is yet another little state, a post-war creation of the British. This is called Trans-Jordan. It is a tiny area, bordering on the desert and lying between Syria and Arabia. The total population of the state is about 300,000, barely equal to a moderate sized city! The British government could have easily joined it on to Palestine but imperial policy always prefers division to consolidation. This state plays an important part as a step in the overland and air route to India. It is also a useful border state between the desert and the fertile lands leading to the sea on the west.

Small as the state is, the same succession of events takes place there as in the larger adjoining countries. There is the popular demand for a democratic parliament which is not agreed to, demonstrations suppressed, censorship, deportations of leaders, boycotts of government measures and so on. The British have cleverly made the Emir Abdullah (another son of King Hussein of the Hejaz and brother of Feisal) the ruler of Trans-Jordan. He is a puppet ruler entirely under their control. But he is useful in screening the British from the people. He gets the blame for much that happens, and he is very unpopular. Trans-Jordan under Abdullah is in fact something like the many small Indian States we have.

In theory the state is independent, but by a treaty which Abdullah signed with the British in 1928, all manner of military and other privileges are given to Britain. Trans-Jordan in fact becomes part of the British Empire. This is another instance, on a small scale, of the new type of independence which flourishes under the British. This treaty and generally this state of affairs is bitterly resented by the people, both Muslim and Christian. The agitation against the treaty was suppressed, even the newspapers supporting it being forbidden, and as I have mentioned above, the leaders being

deported. Thereupon opposition increased, and a National Congress met and adopted a National Pact and denounced the treaty. When the electoral role for the new elections was being prepared it was boycotted by the overwhelming majority of the people. Abdullah and the British, however, managed to gather together a few supporters to make a show ratification of the treaty.

During the troubles in Palestine in 1929 there were great demonstrations in Trans-Jordan against the British and the Balfour Declaration.

I go on writing to you, at important length, of happenings in different countries, and they seem to be the same tale repeated again and again. I do so to make you realise that we have not to deal so much with national peculiarities, as all of us are apt to imagine in our respective countries, as with world forces, with an awakening nationalism all over the East, and with the same technique of imperialism to combat it. As nationalism grows and advances, the tactics of imperialism change slightly; there is an outward attempt to appease and give in so far as forms are concerned. Meanwhile, as this national struggle progresses in the different countries, the social struggle, the class conflict between different classes in each country also grows more obvious, and the feudal, and to some extent the possessing, classes side more and more with the imperialist power.

ARABIA—A JUMP FROM THE MIDDLE
AGES*June 3, 1933*

I have been writing to you about the Arab countries, but I have not so far dealt with the fountain head of the Arabic language and culture and the birth place of Islam, Arabia itself. The source of Arab civilization though it was, it has remained backward and medieval, and has been far outstripped, according to the tests of our modern civilization, by the neighbouring Arab countries—Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Iraq. Arabia is an enormous country; in size and area it is about two-thirds as big as India. And yet the population of the whole country is estimated to be four or five millions only, that is about one-seventieth or one-eightieth of the population of India. It is obvious from this that it is very thinly populated; most of it is indeed a desert, and it was because of this that it escaped the attentions of greedy adventurers in the past, and remained a relic of medievalism, without railways or telegraphs or telephones or the like, in the midst of a changing world. It was largely inhabited by wandering nomad tribes, the Bedouins they are called, and they travelled across the desert sands on their swift camels, the 'ships of the desert', and on the backs of their beautiful Arab horses, known the world over. They lived a patriarchal life which had changed little in a thousand years. The World War changed all this, as it changed many other things.

If you will look at the map you will find that the great Arabian peninsula lies between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. To the south of it lies the Arabian

Sea, to the north lies Palestine and Trans-Jordan and the Syrian desert, and to the north-east green and fertile valleys of Iraq. Along the west coast, bordering the Red Sea, lies the land of Hejaz, which is the cradle of Islam, containing the holy cities Mecca and Medina and the part Jeddah, where thousands of pilgrims land every year on their way to Mecca. In the centre of Arabia and towards the east upto the Persian Gulf lies Nejd. The Hejaz and Nejd are the two main divisions of Arabia. In the south-west lies Yemen, known from the old Roman times as Arabia Felix, Arabia the Fortunate, the Happy, because it was fertile and fruitful, in contrast with the rest which was largely barren and desert. This part is, as one would expect, thickly populated. Almost at the south-western tip of Arabia lies Aden, a British possession and a part of call for ships passing between East and West.

Before the World War nearly the whole country was under Turkish control or acknowledged Turkish overlordships. But in Nejd the Emir Ibn Saud was gradually emerging as an independent ruler and was spreading out by conquest to the Persian Gulf. This was in the years preceding the war. Ibn Saud was the head of a particular community or sect of Muslims known as Wahabis, which was founded in the eighteenth century by Abdul Wahab. This was really a reform movement in Islam, something like the Puritans in christianity. The Wahabis were against many ceremonies and the saint worship that had become so popular with the Muslim masses, in the form of worship of tombs and what were supposed to be relics of holy men. The Wahabis called this idolatry, just as the Puritans of Europe had called the Roman Catholics, who worshipped the images and relics of saints, idolaters. Thus, even apart from political rivalry, there was a religious feud between the Wahabis and the other Muslim sects in Arabia.

During the World War Arabia became a hot-bed of British intrigue, and British money and Indian money

was lavishly spent in subsidising and bribing the various Arab chiefs. All manner of promises were made to them and they were encouraged to revolt against Turkey. Sometimes two rival chiefs, who were fighting each other, were both receiving British subsidies! The British succeeded in getting the Sherif Hussein of Mecca to raise the Arab standard of revolt. Hussein's importance consisted in the fact that he was a descendant of the Prophet Mohammad and was therefore greatly respected. Hussein was promised by the British the kingdom of a united Arabia.

Ibn Saud was cleverer. He got himself recognised as an independent sovereign by the British, accepted a tidy little sum of £ 5,000 or about Rs. 70,000 per month from them, and promised to remain neutral. So, while others were fighting, he consolidated his position and strengthened it, to some extent with the help of British gold. (The Sherif Hussein was becoming unpopular in Islamic countries, including India, because of his rebellion against the Sultan of Turkey, who was also then the Caliph. Ibn Saud, by quietly remaining neutral, took full advantage of changing conditions and slowly built up a reputation for himself of being the strong man of Islam.)

In the south was Yemen. The Imam, or ruler, of Yemen remained loyal to the Turks right through the war. But he was cut off from the scene of operations and could not do much. After Turkey's defeat he became independent. Yemen is still an independent state.

The end of the war found England dominating Arabia and trying to use Hussein and Ibn Saud both as her tools. Ibn Saud was too clever to allow himself to be exploited. The Sherif Hussein's family, however, suddenly blossomed out in full glory, backed as it was with British force. (Hussein himself became king of the Hejaz; one of his sons, Feisal, became ruler of Syria; and another son, Abdullah, was made by the British the ruler of the small new state Trans-Jordan.) The glory was short lived, for, as we have seen, Feisal was driven out of

Syria by the French, and Hussein's kingship vanished away before the advancing Wahabis of Ibn Saud. Feisal, having joined the unemployed again, was provided for by the British with the rulership of Iraq, and there he is still as a king, reigning by the grace of the British.

During the brief period of Hussein's kingship of the Hejaz, the Turkish parliament at Angora abolished the Caliphate in 1924. There was no Caliph, and Hussein, greatly daring, jumped on to the empty throne and proclaimed himself the Caliph of Islam. Ibn Saud saw that his time had come and he appealed both to Arab nationalism and to Muslim internationalism against Hussein. He stood out as the champion of Islam against an ambitious usurper, and with the help of careful propaganda managed to gain the good-will of Muslims in other countries. The Khilafat Committee in India sent him their good wishes. Seeing which way the wind was blowing and realising that the horse they had so far backed was not likely to win, the British quietly withdrew their support of Hussein. Their subsidies were stopped, and poor Hussein, who had been promised so much, was left almost friendless and helpless before a powerful and advancing enemy.

Within a few months, in October, 1924, the Wahabis entered Mecca and, in accordance with their puritan faith, destroyed some tombs. There was a good deal of consternation in Muslim countries at this destruction; even in India much feeling was aroused. Next year Medina and Jiddah fell to Ibn Saud and Hussein and his family were driven away from the Hejaz. Early in 1926 Ibn Saud proclaimed himself king of the Hejaz. In order to consolidate his new position and to keep the good-will of Muslims abroad, he held an Islamic World Congress at Mecca in June, 1926, to which he invited representative Muslims from other countries. Apparently he had no desire to become Caliph, and in any event he was not likely to be accepted as such by large numbers of Muslims because of his Wahabism. King Fuad of Egypt, whose anti-national and despotic

record we have already examined, was keen on becoming the Caliph but nobody would have him, not even his own people of Egypt. Hussein, after his defeat, had abdicated from the Caliphate he had assumed.

The Mecca Islamic Congress did not come to any important decision, and it was perhaps not meant to do so. It was a device adopted by Ibn Saud to strengthen his position especially before foreign powers. Indian representatives of the Khilafat Committee, and I think Maulana Mohammad Ali was one of them, returned disappointed and angry with Ibn Saud. But this did not make much difference to him. He had exploited the Indian Khilafat Committee when he wanted its help, and now he could well do without its good-will.

Ibn Saud was soon master of nearly the whole country with the exception of Yemen which continued as an independent state under its old Imam. But for this south-west corner, he was lord of Arabia and he took the title of king of Nejd, thus becoming a double king, king of Hejaz and king of Nejd. Foreign powers recognised his independence and foreigners were not allowed any special privileges, as they are in Egypt still. Indeed they could not even take wines and other alcoholic drinks.

Ibn Saud had succeeded as a soldier and a fighter. He now set himself the much harder task of fitting his state into modern conditions. From the patriarchal stage it was to jump into the modern world. It appears that Ibn Saud has met with considerable success in this task also, and has thus shown to the world that he is a far-seeing statesman.

His first success was in the putting down of internal disorder. Within a very short time the great caravan and pilgrim routes were perfectly safe. This was a great triumph and was naturally welcomed by the large numbers of pilgrims who had so far often had to face robbery on the highways.

An even more striking success was the settling of the nomad Bedouins. He started these settlements

even before his conquest of the Hejaz, and in this way he laid the foundations of a modern state. It was not easy to settle the restless and wandering and freedom loving Bedouins, but Ibn Saud has largely succeeded. The administration of the state has been improved in many ways and aeroplanes and motors and telephones and many other symbols of modern civilization appeared. Slowly but surely the Hejaz became modernised. But it is not an easy matter to jump from the Middle Ages to the present day and the greatest difficulty lies in changing people's ideas. This new progress and change were not to the liking of many of the Arabs; the new-fangled machinery of the west, their engines and motors and aeroplanes, struck them as the inventions of the evil one. They protested against these innovations, and they even rose against Ibn Saud in 1929. Ibn Saud tried to win them over by tact and argument and succeeded with many. Some continued in their revolt and were defeated by Ibn Saud.

Another difficulty then faced Ibn Saud, but this was a difficulty which all the world had to face. From 1930 onwards there has been a tremendous slump in trade everywhere. The great industrial countries of the west have felt this most and are still struggling in its ever-tightening grip. Arabia has little to do with world trade, but the slump made itself felt in another way. The chief source of revenue of Ibn Saud has been the income derived from the great annual pilgrimage to Mecca. About a hundred thousand pilgrims from foreign countries used to visit Mecca every year. In 1930 there was a sudden drop to forty thousand and the fall continues. This has resulted in a complete upsetting of the economic structure of the state and there is great misery in many parts of Arabia. In some areas it is said that conditions are even worse than in the worst days of Turkish rule. The lack of money has handicapped Ibn Saud in many ways and put a stop to many of his schemes of reform. He would not give

concessions to foreigners for he rightly feared that foreign exploitation of the country's resources would lead to an increase of foreign influence. And this would mean foreign interference and a lessening of independence. His fears were perfectly justified for most of the ills that colonial and dependent countries have suffered from have arisen from this foreign exploitation. Ibn Saud preferred poverty and freedom to a measure of progress and riches minus freedom.

The pressure due to the trade slump has however led Ibn Saud to revise his policy a little, and he is now prepared to give some concessions to foreigners. But even so he is careful to safeguard his independence and conditions are laid down for this. For the present concessions are only to be given to foreign Muslim groups. Thus one of the first concessions to be given has been to an Indian Muslim group of capitalists for the building of a railway between the port Jeddah and Mecca. This railway will be a tremendous thing in Arabia for it will revolutionise the annual pilgrimage. It will not only benefit the pilgrims but help greatly in modernising the Arab's outlook. It is expected that the railway will be functioning within two years, that is by the spring of 1935.

I have already told you in a previous letter of the one railway which exists at present in Arabia—the Hejaz Railway which connects Medina to the Baghdad Railway in Aleppo in Syria.

I have mentioned in the early part of this letter that Yemen in the South-West was known as Arabia Felix. As a matter of fact this name was also applied to a great part of Southern Arabia stretching almost to the Persian Gulf. But the name is most inappropriate for this area, as it is an inhospitable desert. Perhaps it was not known sufficiently in the past and thus a mistake was made. Till recently it was unknown territory, one of the few places on the earth's surface which had not been charted and mapped out. Only three years ago it was crossed for the first time by an English explorer.

IRAQ AND THE VIRTUES OF AERIAL BOMBING

June 7, 1933

One Arab country remains for us to consider. This is Iraq or Mesopotamia, the rich and fertile land between the two rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, the land of old story, of Baghdad and Harounal-Rashid and the Arabian Nights. It lies between Persia and the Arabian desert; to the south is its principal port Basra, a little way up the river from the Persian Gulf; in the north, it touches Turkey. Iraq and Turkey meet in Kurdistan, the area inhabited by the Kurds. Most of these Kurds are in Turkey now, and I have told you of their struggle for freedom against the Turks. But many Kurds are in Iraq also, and they form an important minority there. Mosul, which was long a bone of contention between Turkey and England, now lies in this Northern Kurdish area of Iraq, which means that it is under British control. Near Mosul lie the ruins of ancient Nineveh of the Assyrians.

Iraq was one of the countries for which England received a 'mandate' from the League of Nations, a 'mandate' being, in the pious language of the League, a 'sacred trust' of civilization on behalf of the League of Nations. The idea was that the inhabitants of the mandated territory were not advanced enough or capable of looking after their own interests and were therefore to be helped in doing so by the great Powers. A comparable procedure perhaps would be to appoint a tiger to look after the interests of a number of cows or deer. These mandates were supposed to be given at the desire of the people concerned. The mandates of

the countries freed from Turkish rule in Western Asia fell to the lot of England and France. The governments of these two countries declared, as I have already told you, that their sole aim was "the complete and definite emancipation of the peoples and the establishment of national governments and administrations deriving their authority from the initiative and free-choice of the indigenous populations." What steps have been taken to realise this noble aim during the last dozen years, we have briefly seen so far as Syria, Palestine and Trans-Jordan there were repeated disturbances and non-cooperation and boycott. The 'initiative and free choice' of the people was then encouraged by shooting them down, deporting and exiling their leaders, suppressing their newspapers, destroying their cities and villages, and often having martial law. There is nothing novel in such happenings. Imperialist powers have indulged in violence and destruction and terrorism from the earliest days of historic record. The novel feature of the modern type of imperialism is its attempt to hide its terrorism and exploitation behind pious phrases about 'trusteeship' and the 'good of the masses' and 'the training of backward peoples in self-government' and the like. They shoot and kill and destroy only for the good of the people shot down. This hypocrisy may be perhaps a sign of advance, for hypocrisy is a tribute to virtue, and it shows that the truth is not liked and is, therefore, wrapped up in these comforting and deluding phrases and thus hidden away. But somehow this sanctimonious hypocrisy seems far worse than the brutal truth.

Let us now see how the wishes of the inhabitants were given effect to in Iraq and how this country has marched to freedom under the British mandate. During the World War the English had made Iraq, or Mesopotamia as it used to be called then, their base for operations against Turkey. They flooded the country with British and Indian troops. They suffered one big defeat in April, 1916, when a British army under General

Townshend had to surrender to the Turks at Kutal-Amara. There was terrible waste and mismanagement in the whole of the Mesopotamian campaign, and as the Indian government was largely responsible for this, it came in for a great deal of strong criticism for its inefficiency and stupidity. However the great resources of the British told in the long run and they drove the Turks north and captured Baghdad and later almost reached Mosul. At the end of the war, the whole of Iraq was under British military occupation.

◀The first reaction of the grant of the Iraq mandate to England was seen early in 1920. There were strong protests against this and the protests soon developed into disturbances, and the disturbances into a rebellion, which spread to the whole country. It is a curious and interesting fact that this first half of 1920 saw more or less simultaneous disturbances in Turkey, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Persia. Even in India in those days non-cooperation was in the air. The rebellion in Iraq was ultimately crushed largely with the help of troops from India. It has long been the function of the Indian army to do the dirty work of British imperialism, and because of this, they have made our country sufficiently unpopular in the Middle East and elsewhere.▶

The Iraq rebellion was put down by the British, partly by force and partly by assurances of future independence. They established a provisional government with Arab ministers, but behind each minister was a British adviser, who was the real power. Even these tame and nominated ministers proved to be too aggressive for British liking. British plans demanded a complete subservience of Iraq and some of the Ministers refused to be parties to this. Therefore, in April, 1921, the British arrested and exiled the leading minister, Sayyid Talib Shah, who was the ablest of the lot, and another step was thus taken in preparing the country for independence. In the summer of 1921, Feisal, the son of Hussein of the Hejaz, was brought

over by the British and presented to the Iraqis as their future king. Feisal, you will remember, was just then unemployed as his Syrian venture had collapsed before the French attack. He was a good friend of the British and had taken a leading part in the Arab revolt against Turkey during the World War. He was thus likely to be more amenable to British plans than the local ministers had so far been. The 'notables', the rich middle class and other leading personalities, agreed to have Feisal as King on condition that the government, was a constitutional one with a democratic parliament. They had little choice in the matter. What they wanted was a real parliament and as Feisal was likely to be King anyhow they made this parliament a condition. The people generally were not consulted. So Feisal became King in August, 1921.

But this was no solution of the problem, for the Iraqi people were very much opposed to the British mandate and wanted complete independence and then unity with the other Arab countries. Agitation and demonstrations continued, and matters came to a head a year later in August, 1922. The British authorities then gave a further lesson in independence to the Iraqis. The British High Commissioner, Sir Percy Cox put an end to the power of the King (who was ill then) and the ministry and some kind of a council which Iraq had been given, and took full charge of the government himself. In fact he became the absolute dictator and he enforced his will and suppressed disturbances with the help of British forces, and especially the British Air Force. The old story, which we find everywhere with variations—India, Egypt, Syria, etc., was repeated. Nationalist newspapers were suspended, the parties were dissolved, leaders were exiled and British aeroplanes with their bombs established the might of the British empire.

Again, this was no solution of the problem. After a few months Sir Percy Cox again permitted the King and the ministry to function outwardly, and got

these people to agree to a treaty with Britain. Assurances were again given that England would help Iraq to independence and even make her a member of the League of Nations. Behind these beautiful and comforting promises lay the solid fact that the Iraq government was made to agree to run the administration with the help of British officers or those approved by Britain. This treaty of October, 1922, made over the heads of the people, was condemned by the people. It was pointed out that the Arab government was a sham and the real power continued to be the British authorities. The leaders decided to boycott the elections to the National Constituent Assembly, which was called to draw up the future constitution. This non-cooperation was successful and the Assembly could not meet. There were also disturbances and difficulties in collecting taxes.

For over a year, right through 1923, these troubles continued. At length some changes, favourable to Iraq, were made in the treaty, and some of the leading agitators were exiled. The agitation lessened, and early in 1924 elections for the Constituent Assembly could be held. This Assembly also opposed the British treaty. Strong pressure was brought to bear upon it by the British, and at last the treaty was ratified by a little over a third of the members, a large number of the deputies not even attending this session.

The Constituent Assembly drafted a new constitution for Iraq, and on paper it seemed a fair one laying down that Iraq was a sovereign and independent free state with a constitutional hereditary monarchy, and a parliamentary form of government. But of the two houses of parliament: one, the senate, was to be nominated by the King. Thus the king had great power and behind the king were the British officials who occupied the key positions. This constitution came into force in March, 1925, and for some years the new parliament functioned but the protest against the mandate continued. A great deal of attention was

concentrated on the dispute between England and Turkey about Mosul, for Iraq was also a claimant of this area. This dispute was finally settled in June, 1926, by a joint treaty between England, Iraq and Turkey. Mosul went to Iraq, and as Iraq itself lies in the shadow of British imperialism, British interests were thus safeguarded.

(In June, 1930, there was a fresh treaty of alliance between Britain and Iraq. Again Iraq's full independence, both in home and foreign affairs, was recognised. But the safeguards and the exceptions were such as to convert this independence into a veiled protectorate. In order to safeguard the route to India, Britain's 'essential communications' as the treaty says, Iraq provides England with sites for air bases. Britain also maintains troops in Mosul and elsewhere. Iraq is only to have British military instructors, and British officers are to serve in an advisory capacity with the Iraq forces. Arms, ammunitions, aircraft, etc., are to be obtained from Britain. In case of war Britain is to have all facilities in the country in order to carry on warlike operations against the enemy. Thus from the strategic area round Mosul England can strike easily at Turkey, Persia or at the Soviets in Azerbaijan.)

(This treaty was followed in 1931 by a Judicial Agreement between Britain and Iraq, in which Iraq undertakes to employ a British Judicial Adviser a British President of the Court of Appeal, and British presidents at Baghdad, Basra, Mosul and other places.

Besides these provisions it appears that British officials occupy many high offices. In effect therefore this 'independent' country is practically a protectorate of England, and the treaty of alliance of 1930, which insures this is for twenty-five years.)

Although the new parliament functioned after the adoption of the new constitution in 1925, the people were far from satisfied and in the outlying areas disturbances sometimes took place. This was especially the case in Kurdish areas where there were repeated

outbreaks, which were suppressed by the British Air Force by the gentle practice of bombing and destroying whole villages. After the treaty of 1930 the question arose of Iraq being made a member of the League of Nations under British auspices. But the country was not at peace and disturbances continued. This was neither to the credit of the mandatory power, England, nor to that of the existing government of King Feisal, for these revolts were proof enough that the people were not satisfied with the government that had been thrust upon them by the British. It was considered very undesirable that these matters should come up before the League, and so a special effort was made to put an end to these disturbances by force and terrorism. The British Air Force was used for this purpose and the result of its attempts to bring peace and order may be appreciated to some extent from the description of an eminent English officer. Lt.-Col. Sir Arnold Wilson, in the course of the anniversary lecture to the Royal Asian Society in London on June 8, 1932, referred to

"the pertinacity with which (notwithstanding declarations at Geneva) the R. A. F. has been bombing the Kurdish population for the last ten years, and in particular the last six months. Devastated villages, slaughtered cattle, maimed women and children bear witness to the spread, in the words of the special correspondent to the 'Times', of a uniform pattern of civilization."

Finding that the people of the villages often ran away and hid themselves on the approach of an aeroplane, and were not sporting enough to wait for the bombs to kill them, a new type of bomb—the time-delayed bomb—was used. This did not burst on falling but was so wound up as to burst some time afterwards. This devilish ruse was meant to mislead the villages into returning to their huts after the aeroplanes had gone and then being hit by the bursting of the bomb. Those who died were the comparatively fortunate ones. Those who were maimed, whose limbs were torn away

sometimes, or other serious injuries caused, were far more unfortunate, for there was no medical aid available in those distant villages.

So peace and order were restored, and the government of Iraq presented itself under British auspices before the League of Nations and was admitted as a member. It has been said, truly enough, that Iraq was "bombed" into the League.

Iraq having become a member state of the League, The British mandate is over. It has been replaced by the treaty of 1930, which ensures effective British control of the state. Dissatisfaction at this state of affairs continues for the people of Iraq want complete freedom and the unity of Arab nations. Membership of the League of Nations does not interest them much for they consider, as do most other oppressed people in the east, that the League is just an instrument in the hands of the great European Powers to further their own colonial and other ends.

The popular demand for more effective freedom is so great that even King Feisal has to press for it before the British. The papers announce, as I write this, that he is going to England on an official visit in a few days' time. Probably the question of Iraqi-British relations will again be discussed and some minor advantages will be secured by Iraq. So long as the military and strategic control remains in England's hands, she is prepared to give in on small matters that do not count, in order to appear generous and if possible to gain the good-will of the other party. Iraq is likely to be an important centre when the next big war comes.

We have now finished our survey of the Arab nations. You will have noticed how all of them, in common with India and other eastern countries, were powerfully moved by waves of nationalism after the World War. It was like an electric current passing through all of them at the same time. Another remarkable feature was the similarity of methods

adopted. There were insurrections and violent rebellions in many of these countries, but gradually they came to rely more and more on a policy of non-cooperation and boycott. There is no doubt that the fashion in this new method of resistance was set by India in 1920, when the Congress followed Bapu's lead. I do not mean that these other countries followed Bapu's main arguments in favour of them. But none the less the idea of non-cooperation and the boycott of legislatures has spread from India to other countries of the East, and become one of the well recognised and frequently practised methods of the struggle for national freedom.

I should like to draw your attention to an interesting contrast between English and French methods of imperialist control. England, in all her colonial countries tries to form an alliance with the feudal, the landowning and the most conservative and backward classes. We have seen this in India, in Egypt and elsewhere. She creates shaky thrones in her colonial countries and puts reactionary rulers on them, well knowing that they will support her. Thus she puts Firad in Egypt, Feisal in Iraq, Abdullah in Trans-Jordan, and she tried to put Hussein in the Hejaz. France on the other hand, being herself a typical bourgeois country, tries to find support in some parts of the bourgeoisie of the colonial countries, the rising middle classes. In Syria, for instance, she looked to Christian middle classes for support. Both England and France in all the colonial countries under them rely principally on the policy of weakening the nationalism opposed to them by dividing it and creating minority, racial, and religious problems. Nationalism is, however, gradually surmounting these divisions all over the east, and nowhere more so perhaps than in the Arab countries of the Middle East, where religious groups are becoming weaker before the ideal of a common nationality.

I have told you above about the activities of the

British R. A. F. (Royal Air Force) in Iraq. For the last dozen years or so it has become the definite policy of the British Government to use aeroplanes to do 'police work', as it is called, in their semi-colonial countries. This is done especially where a measure of self-government is given and the administration is largely indigenous. Armies of occupation are not kept now in these countries, or are reduced greatly. This has many advantages. A great deal of money is saved and the military occupation of a country is less in evidence. At the same time aeroplanes and bombs give them complete control over the situation. In this way the use of bombing from aeroplanes has increased greatly independent areas, and the British probably use this method far more than any other power. I have told you about Iraq. The same story can be repeated for the North-West Frontier of India where this kind of bombing is a regular and frequent occurrence.

This method may be cheaper and more expeditious than the old one of sending an army. But it is a terribly cruel and ghastly method. Indeed it is difficult to imagine anything more disgustingly barbarous than to throw bombs, and especially time-delayed bombs, on whole villages and destroying innocent and guilty alike. This method also makes an invasion of another country very easy. So an outcry has arisen against it and eloquent speeches are delivered at Geneva at the League of Nations against the barbarity of attacking civilian populations by air. At a meeting of the League, or of the Disarmament Conference of the League, held last year (in July, 1932), the British representative, Sir John Simon, joined in the universal protest and said that this must be abolished 'out and out'. But, strange to say, the resolution that was passed made an exception of the air-bombing of 'native villages'!!

Only a week ago (on May 29, 1933), the subject was again discussed at the Disarmament Conference at Geneva and the *Reuter* cablegram says that "a storm of

protest greeted the British proposal to reserve the use of air craft for police purposes in the colonies." It appears that the representatives of every other country, including the United States, insisted on the total abolition of aerial bombardment. But the British government refuses to agree, and is even prepared to risk the break-up of the Disarmament Conference over this question. On this point Britain seems to be against the world. But no doubt she has secret support from some other imperialist power.

AFGHANISTAN AND SOME OTHER
COUNTRIES OF ASIA*June 8, 1933*

To the east of Iraq lies Iran or Persia, and to the east of Persia lies Afghanistan. Both Persia and Afghanistan are India's neighbours, for the Persian frontier touches India (in Baluchistan) for several hundred miles, and Afghanistan and India lie side by side for about a thousand miles from the extreme western tip of Baluchistan to the northern mountains of the Hindu Kush, where India rests her snowy head on the heart of Central Asia, and looks down upon the territories of the Soviets. Not only are these three countries neighbours but racially they are akin, for the old Aryan stock dominates in all of them. Culturally, as I have shown to you, they have had much in common in the past. Till recently, Persian was the language of the learned in north India and even now it is popular, especially among the Muslims. In Afghanistan Persian is still the court language, the popular language of the Afghans being Pashtu.

About Persia I do not wish to add to what I have already told you in previous letters. But recent events in Afghanistan deserve a brief mention. Afghan history is almost a part of Indian history; indeed for long Afghanistan was part of India. Since its separation, and especially during the last hundred years or more, it has been a buffer state between the two great empires of Russia and England. The Russian Empire has gone and given place to the Soviet Union, but Afghanistan still plays its old part of buffer, where Englishmen and Russians intrigue and try to gain the

mastery. The nineteenth century saw these intrigues develop into wars between England and Afghanistan, which resulted in many British disasters but the ultimate supremacy of England. Many Afghan detenus, members of the Afghan royal family, are still scattered about north India and remind us of England's interventions in Afghanistan. Amirs friendly to the British came to rule, and Afghanistan's foreign policy was definitely put under British control. But, however friendly these Amirs were, they could not be wholly relied upon and subsidies of large sums of money were given to them annually by the British to keep them in humour and bound down to themselves. Such was the Amir Abdur Rahman, who had a long reign ending in 1901. He was followed by the Amir Habibullah who was also well inclined towards the British.

One of the reasons for Afghanistan's dependence on the British in India was the position of the country. You will see in the map that it is cut off from the sea by Baluchistan. It was thus like a house with no means of reaching the highway except through some one else's grounds and this is a troublesome affair. Its easiest way of communicating with the outside world was through India. There were no proper communications in those days in the Russian Territory to the north of Afghanistan. I believe that the Soviet government has recently developed these communications, both by building railways and encouraging air and motor services. India thus being Afghanistan's window to the world, the British government could take advantage of this fact by exercising pressure in many ways. This difficulty of Afghanistan's access to the sea is still one of the major problems confronting the country.

Early in 1919 the intrigues and rivalries of the Afghan court broke out on the surface and there were two palace revolutions in quick succession. I do not know exactly what happened behind the scenes or who

was responsible for these changes. The Amir Habibullah was first assassinated by some one and thereupon his brother Nasrullah became Amir. But very soon Nasrullah was removed and Amanullah, one of the younger sons of Habibullah, became Amir. He followed this up in May, 1919, by a petty invasion of India. Exactly what the immediate provocation for this was or who took the initiative I do not know. Probably Amanullah resented any kind of dependence on the British and wanted to establish the full independence of his country. Probably also he thought that the conditions were favourable. Those were the days, you will remember, of martial law in the Punjab and general discontent in India, and a growing agitation among the Muslims on the Khilafat question. Whatever the causes and inducements, an Afghan war with the British resulted. But this war was of a remarkably short duration, and there was very little fighting. In a military sense the British in India were of course far stronger than Amanullah, but they were in no mood for war and some petty incidents were enough to make them come to terms with the Afghans. The result was the recognition of Afghanistan as an independent country, with full control of its foreign relations with other countries. Thus Amanullah had gained his object and his prestige went up everywhere in Europe and Asia. Naturally he was not in the good books of the British.

Amanullah began to attract still more attention by the new policy he pursued in his country. This was one of rapid reforms on western lines—the 'westernization' of Afghanistan as it is called. In this work his wife, Queen Souriyah, helped him greatly. She had been educated partly in Europe and the seclusion of women behind the veil irked upon her. Thus began the strange process of changing a very backward country in quick time, of pushing and driving the Afghan out of his old ruts into the new ways. Mustafa Kemal Pasha was evidently Amanullah's ideal, and he

tried to copy him in many ways, even making Afghans put on coats and trousers and European hats, and making them shave off their beards. But Amanullah did not have the grit or the ability of Mustafa Kemal. Kemal Pasha had made his position perfectly secure, internationally and nationally, before he started his sweeping reforms. He had an efficient and hardened army at his back and a tremendous prestige with all his people. Amanullah went ahead without these precautions, and his task was far the harder for the Afghans were much more backwards than any of the Turks.

But it is easy to be wise after the event. In those early years of Amanullah he seemed to be carrying everything before him. He sent many Afghan boys and girls to Europe for education. He started many reforms in his administration. He strengthened his international position by treaties with his neighbours and with Turkey. The Soviets had deliberately adopted a generous and friendly policy with all eastern countries from China to Turkey, and this Soviet friendliness and help had been a great factor in the freeing of Turkey and Persia from foreign control. It must also have been an important factor in the ease with which Amanullah gained his object in his short war against England in 1919. In subsequent years quite a number of treaties and alliances were made between the four powers: Soviet Russia, Turkey, Persia and Afghanistan. There was no treaty between the lot of them or between any three of them. Each one made a separate, and more or less similar, treaty with the other three. Thus arose a net-work of treaties in the Middle East strengthening all these countries. I shall give you just a list of these treaties with their dates:

Turco-Afghan treaty	..	..	February 19, 1921.
Soviet-Turkish	„	..	December 17, 1925.
Turkish-Persian	„	..	April 22, 1926.
Soviet-Afghan	„	..	August 31, 1926.
Soviet-Persian	„	..	October 1, 1927.
Persian-Afghan	„	..	November 28, 1927.

These treaties were a triumph for Soviet diplomacy and were hard blows to British influence in the Middle East. Needless to say the British government strongly disapproved of them and particularly disliked Amanullah's friendship and leanings towards Soviet Russia.

Early in 1928 Amanullah and Queen Souriyah left Afghanistan for a grand tour of Europe. They went to many European capitals—Rome, Paris, London, Berlin, Moscow—and everywhere they had a great reception. All these countries were keen on winning Amanullah's good-will for trade and political purposes. He was also given valuable presents. But he played the diplomat and did not commit himself. On his return he visited Turkey and Persia.

His long tour had attracted much attention. It had increased Amanullah's prestige; and it had increased greatly Afghanistan's importance in the world. But all was not well in Afghanistan itself. Amanullah had taken a great risk in leaving his country in the midst of big changes which were upsetting the old routine of life. Mustafa Kemal had never taken this risk. During Amanullah's long absence all the reactionary people and forces ranged against him gradually came to the front. There were all manner of intrigues, and manner of rumours to discredit him. Money seemed to flow in for this anti-Amanullah propaganda, nobody knew from where. Many *mullahs*, the priestly ones, seemed to be paid for this work and they spread all over the country denouncing Amanullah as a *Kafir*, an enemy of the faith. Curious pictures of Queen Souriyah in European evening dress or some negligé were circulated by the thousand in the villages—to show how improperly she used to dress herself. Who was responsible for this widespread and expensive propaganda? The Afghans had neither the money for it nor the training; they were just suitable material for it. It was widely believed and stated in the Middle East and in Europe that the British secret service was at the back of this propaganda.

Such things can seldom be proved, and no definite evidence was forthcoming to connect the British with this work, though it is said that the Afghan rebels were armed with British rifles. But it was obvious enough that England was interested in weakening Amanullah in Afghanistan.

While his foundations were being sapped in Afghanistan, Amanullah was enjoying splendid receptions in European capitals. He returned to his country full of fresh zeal for his reforms, full of new ideas and still more impressed by Kemal Pasha whom he had met at Angora. He set to work immediately to push on these reforms. He abolished the titles of the nobility and tried to curtail the powers of the religious heads. He even tried to make a cabinet council responsible for the government, thus reducing his own autocratic powers. The emancipation of women was also slowly pushed on.

Suddenly the smouldering fire broke out and rebellion flared up towards the end of 1928. Under the leadership of an ordinary water-carrier, Bacha-i-Saqao, this rebellion spread, and in 1929 it triumphed. Amanullah and his queen ran away and the water-carrier became the Amir. For five months Bacha-i-Saqao reigned in Kabul when he was removed by Nadir Khan, a general and minister of Amanullah. Nadir Khan played his own hand and when he had triumphed he took the ruler's place himself as Nadir Shah. For the last three and a half years Nadir Shah has been the king of Afghanistan but during this period troubles and disturbances have continued, and they still continue. Apparently he is far more friendly to England than Amanullah was.

Afghanistan is far from settled down and rumours of intrigues are frequent. This is not surprising as the country must pay the penalty for being a buffer state between two powerful rivals. Meanwhile Amanullah and ex-Queen Souriyah live in Rome. The world is becoming quite crowded with royal exiles.

This morning's paper contained an item of news

which shows that all is not well in Afghanistan. Two days ago, on June 6, 1933, an Afghan student shot dead the Afghan minister in Berlin with the cry "For freedom's sake." This minister was the brother of King Nadir Shah.

And now I have done with Afghanistan and with western and southern Asia. I shall tell you briefly about some recent happenings in the south-east corner of Asia and then end this letter. I cannot tell you much about this part as I know very little myself.

East of Burma lies Siam, the only country which has managed to keep its independence in this part of the world. It is jammed in between British Burma and French Indo-China. The country is full of old Indian remains, and its traditions and culture and ceremonies still bear the old Indian impress. Till recently it was an autocratic monarchy and social conditions were largely feudal with a small and growing middle class. The title of the kings was frequently, I believe, Rama, another word which brings us back to India. Thus they were Rama I, Rama II and so on. During the World War Siam joined the allies, when the victory of the allies seemed assured, and later it became a member of the League of Nations.

In June, 1932, there was a palace revolution in Bangkok, which is the capital of Siam, and it was announced that the king and his family and principal ministers had been arrested by a group of young Siamese officers and others who demanded a constitution. The king agreed to some kind of constitution limiting his own powers and a People's Assembly came into existence. I do not know exactly what happened but it seemed that a military coup had taken place, something after the fashion of the Young Turks and Sultan Abdul Hamid. Of course behind this coup was the distress of the people. The revolution, however, did not seem to be a popular mass upheaval. The king's quick submission ended the crisis. It seems that the king's readiness to submit to a change was not very genuine. In April,

1933, he, King Prajadhipok, suddenly dissolved the People's Assembly on the ground that some members of this Assembly were advocating communism. It is difficult to judge from this distance without more information. It appears, however, that the king was merely waiting for a pretext to put an end to the Assembly and resume his autocratic powers. Probably everything that limits his powers seems to him communistic. It is quite possible that communism has spread to some extent in Siam, as it is fairly strong in parts of China. But it is more likely that it is bourgeois nationalism, with a socialistic tinge, which is growing and attacking the old feudal order of Siam. The latest news is that another "peaceful revolution" has taken place and the forward group of military officers has asserted itself again and insisted on reviving the Assembly.

Nationalism has spread also and is growing in strength in French Indo-China to the east of Siam. In trying to suppress the nationalist movement, the French government have had many conspiracy cases and given long terms of imprisonment to large numbers of people. A revealing statement was made in Geneva at a meeting of the Disarmament Conference in March, 1933, by the French representative. This representative, M. Sarraut, had himself been the governor of French Indo-China. He referred to "the development of nationalism in colonial possessions which were becoming extremely difficult to administer." He gave the instance of French Indo-China where 10000 men were now required to maintain order as compared to 1500 when he was governor there.

Lastly, Java in the Dutch East Indies, famous for its sugar and rubber, and famous also for the terrible exploitation of the people that used to take place on its plantations. With the growth of nationalism have come jointly, as in India, a small measure of reform and a great deal of repression. In 1927 there was a rising against the Dutch which was crushed with considerable cruelty. The Dutch government called it a communist.

rising but from all accounts it was more nationalist than communist. Undoubtedly communism is also spreading all over the east but numerically it is still unimportant. Its strength lies in the fact that it attracts able, self-sacrificing and aggressive young men and women.

A few months ago a curious incident took place in the eastern seas off Java. The crew of one of the Dutch warships, protesting against a wage cut, took charge of the ship and sailed away. They did no damage and they made it clear that they were merely holding out for their wages. It was a kind of an aggressive strike. Dutch aeroplanes thereupon bombed this warship, killing many of the crew, and thus took possession of it.

And now we must leave Asia with its ever-recurring conflicts between nationalism and imperialism, and go to Europe for Europe demands attention. We have not considered post-war Europe yet, and you must remember that European conditions are still the key to world conditions. So our next few letters will be about Europe.

Two parts of Asia remain to be considered, two huge areas, the Chinese area and the Soviet area in the north. We must come back to them some time later.

THE REVOLUTION THAT DID NOT COME OFF

June 13, 1933

A well-known English writer of to-day, G. K. Chesterton, has said somewhere that the greatest event of the nineteenth century in England was the revolution which did not happen. You will remember that on several occasions during that century England was on the verge of revolution, that is a social revolution brought about by the petty bourgeoisie and the workers. But always the ruling classes yielded just a little at the last moment, gave an outward share in the parliamentary structure by extending the vote, and also gave a small share in the profits of imperialist exploitation abroad, and thus kept down the impending revolution. They could afford to do so because of their expanding empire and the money they made out of it. The revolution therefore did not take place in England but its shadow frequently lay over the country and the fear of it shaped events. Thus a thing that did not actually happen is said to have been the greatest event of the last century.

In the same way perhaps it might be said that the greatest event of the post-war period in Western Europe was the revolution that did not come off. The conditions that produced the Bolshevik revolution in Russia were present in the central and western European countries also, though in a lesser degree. The principal difference between Russia and the industrialised countries of the west—England, Germany, France, etc.,—was the absence of a strong bourgeoisie in Russia. As a matter of fact, according to the Marxist theory, a workers' revolution was expected to break out first in

these advanced industrial countries, and certainly not in backward Russia. But the World War smashed up the rotten old structure of Tsarism, and just because there was no strong middle class to step in and control the government through a parliament of the western type, the workers' Soviets seized the power. Thus, curiously enough, the very backwardness of Russia, the very cause of her weakness, became a reason for her to take a bigger step forward than the more advanced countries. The Bolsheviks under Lenin took this step, but they were under no illusions. They knew that Russia was backward and would take time to catch up to the more advanced countries. They hoped that their example in establishing a workers' republic would spur on the workers of other European countries to revolt against the existing régimes. In this general European social revolution, they felt, lay their only hope of survival, for otherwise the young Soviet government of Russia would be suppressed by the rest of the capitalist world.

It was in this hope and belief that they broadcasted their appeals to the workers of the world in the early days of their revolution. They denounced all imperialist designs to annex territory; they said that they would not make any claim on the basis of the secret treaties between Tsarist Russia and England and France; they made it clear that Constantinople must remain with the Turks. They offered the most generous terms to the Eastern countries and to the many oppressed nationalities of the Tsarist Empire. And, above all, they stood out as the champions of the international working class, calling upon the workers everywhere to follow their example and establish socialist republic Nationalism, and Russia as a nation, meant nothing to them, except as that part of the world where, for the first time in history a workers' government had been established.

The Bolshevik appeals were suppressed by the German and allied governments, but they managed to trickle down to the various fronts and the factory areas. Their effect was considerable everywhere and a noticeable

cracking up of the French army was visible. The German army and workers were even more affected. There were even risings and revolts in Germany and Austria and Hungary—the defeated countries—and for many months, or even a year or two, Europe seemed to be on the verge of a mighty social revolution. The victorious allied countries were a little better off than the defeated ones for success had toned them up and given them hopes (which were empty enough as subsequent events proved) of making good some of their losses at the expense of the defeated powers. But even in the allied countries there was a temper of revolution. Indeed, all over Europe and Asia, the air was thick with discontent and the fire of revolution smouldered and rumbled beneath the surface and often threatened to break out. There was a difference, however, in the types of discontent in Asia and Europe, and in the classes which threatened revolution. In Asia the middle classes were the leaders in the national revolts against western imperialism; in Europe the working classes threatened to upset the existing bourgeois capitalist social order and to seize power from the middle classes.

In spite of all these rumblings and portents nothing like the Russian revolution broke out in central or Western Europe. The old structure was strong enough to resist the attacks made upon it, but these attacks weakened it and frightened it sufficiently to protect Soviet Russia. The Soviets would, in all likelihood, have collapsed before the imperialist powers in 1919 or 1920 but for this powerful help behind the lines.

Gradually, as year followed year after the end of the World War, things appeared to settle down to some extent. The revolutionary elements were suppressed by a curious alliance of the reactionary conservatives, monarchists and feudal landlords on the one side and the moderate socialists or Social Democrats on the other. This was indeed a strange alliance for the Social Democrats proclaimed their faith in Marxism and a workers government. Their ideal thus appeared to be, on the

surface, the same as that of the Soviets and Communists. And yet these Social Democrats feared the Communists more than the Capitalists and combined with the latter to crush the former. Or it may be that they feared the capitalists so much that they did not dare to go against them; they hoped to consolidate their position by peaceful and parliamentary means and thus bring in socialism almost imperceptibly. Whatever their motives may have been, they helped the reactionary elements to crush the revolutionary spirit and thus actually brought about a counter-revolution in many of the European countries. This counter-revolution in its turn crushed these very Social Democratic parties and new and aggressively anti-socialist forces came to power. Roughly, events have shaped themselves in this way in Europe during the last fourteen years since the World War ended.

But the conflict has not ended, and the fight between the two rival forces—capitalism and socialism—goes on. There can be no permanent compromise between the two, although there have been and there may be in the future temporary arrangements and treaties between the two. Russia and communism stand at one pole, and the great capitalist countries of Western Europe and America stand at the other. Between the two the liberals, the moderates, the centre party people are disappearing everywhere. The conflict and the discontent is really caused by complete economic upsets and increasing misery all over the world and till some equilibrium establishes itself this tussle must continue.

Of the many abortive revolutions that have taken place since the war the German one is the most interesting and revealing, and I shall therefore tell you something about it. I have already told you of the failure of the socialists in all European countries to live up to their ideals and promises, when the war came. They were swept away by the fierce nationalism of each country and forgot the international ideal of socialism in the mad blood-lust of war. On the very verge of the World War, on July 30, 1914, the German Social

Democratic Party leaders declared against the sacrifice of "a single drop of blood of a German soldier" for the imperialist designs of the Hapsburgs. (The quarrel at the time was between Austria and Serbia over the murder of the Archduke Franz-Ferdinand of Austria). Five days later the party supported the war, and so did other similar parties in other countries. Indeed the Austrian Socialist leader actually talked of adding Poland and Serbia to the Austrian Empire, and said that this would be no annexation!

Early in 1918 the Bolshevik appeals to the workers of Europe produced a marked effect on German workers and there were big strikes in the munition factories. This produced a very serious situation for the German imperial government and might even have resulted in disaster. The socialist leaders thereupon saved the situation by joining the strike committee and breaking the strike from within.

On November 4, 1918, a naval mutiny broke out in Kiel in North Germany. The great battleships of the German navy had been ordered to put out to sea, but the sailors and stokers refused to do so. The troops that were sent out to suppress them went over to them and made common cause. The officers were deposed or arrested, and councils (Soviets) of workers and soldiers were formed. It was just like the early beginnings of the Soviet revolution in Russia and it seemed to be spreading all over Germany. Immediately the Social Democratic leaders appeared at Kiel and succeeded in diverting the sailors' and workers' attention to other channels. These sailors however left Kiel with their arms and spread out all over the country carrying the seeds of revolt.

The revolutionary movement was spreading. In Bavaria (South Germany) a republic was proclaimed. Still the Kaiser stuck on. On November 9, a general strike began in Berlin. All work was stopped, and there was hardly any violence as the whole garrison of the city went over to the side of the revolution. The old order

had visibly collapsed and the question was what would take its place. Some Communist leaders were on the point of proclaiming a Soviet or republic when a Social Democrat leader forestalled them by proclaiming a parliamentary republic.

So the German Republic came into existence. But it was a shadow republic for nothing was really changed. The Social Democrats who were in command of the situation left almost everything as it was; they took a few high posts, ministerships, etc., and the army, the civil service, the judicial service, and the whole administration continued as it was in the Kaiser's days. Thus, as the title of a recent book says, "The Kaiser Goes: The Generals Remain." Revolutions are not made or strengthened in this way. A race revolution must change the political, the social and the economic structure. It is absurd to expect that a revolution will survive if power is left in the hands of its enemies. The German Social Democrats, however, did this very thing, and gave full opportunities to opponents of the Revolution to prepare for and organise its downfall. The old militarists were still the bosses in Germany.

The new Social Democratic government did not like the Kiel sailors wandering about the country spreading revolutionary ideas. They tried to suppress these sailors in Berlin and there were violent conflicts early in January, 1919. The German Communists thereupon tried to establish a Soviet government and called upon the city masses for help. They got some help from the people and took possession of government buildings and for about a week in January—known as the 'Red Week' in Berlin—they seemed to be in power in the city. But the response from the masses was not sufficient as most of the people were puzzled and did not know what to do. The regular soldiers in Berlin were also puzzled and they remained neutral. As these soldiers could not be relied upon, the Social Democrats enrolled some special volunteer troops for the purpose, and with their help they crushed the Communist rising. The fighting was

cruel, and no quarter was given. Some days after the fighting was over two of the Communist leaders, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, were tracked down to a place where they were in hiding and murdered in cold blood. This murder, and the subsequent acquittal of the people who had been responsible for it, created great bitterness between the communists and the Social Democrats. Karl Liebknecht was the son of Wilhelm Liebknecht, the famous old socialist fighter of the nineteenth century, whose name has already appeared in a previous letter of mine. Rosa Luxemburg was also an old worker and a great friend of Lenin. As it happened, both Liebknecht and Luxemburg had been opposed to the communist rising which resulted in their death.

The Communists had been crushed by the Social Democratic Republic, and, soon after, a constitution for the Republic was drawn up at Weimar; hence it is known as the Weimar constitution. Within three months a fresh change threatened the Republic, this time from the other side. The reactionaries staged a counter-revolution against the Republic and the old generals figured prominently in it. This revolt is known as the 'Kapp Putsch'—Kapp was the leader and 'putsch' is the German word for such a rising. The Social Democratic government ran away from Berlin, but the workers of Berlin put an end to the 'putsch' by a sudden general strike, a complete *hartal* of all activities which brought the life of the great city to a stand still. Kapp and his friends had now to run away from Berlin before the organised workers and the Social Democratic leaders returned again to take charge of the government. In marked contrast with their treatment of the communists, the government was quite gentle with the Kappist rebels. Many of them were officers drawing pensions, and, in spite of their rebellion, even the pensions continued.

A similar counter-revolutionary "putsch" or rising was organised in Bavaria. It failed but the chief interest of it is that the organiser was a petty Austrian officer, Hitler, who to-day is the dictator of Germany.

The result of all this was that although the German Republic carried on in name, it grew weaker and weaker. The split between the socialists, the Social Democrats and Communists, weakened both, and the reactionaries who openly denounced the Republic, grew more and more organised and aggressive. The big land-owners 'Junkers' they are called in Germany—and the big industrialists gradually pushed out the few socialist element that had remained in the government. The peace treaty of Versailles came as a great shock to the German people and this was exploited by the reactionaries to their own advantage. Under this treaty Germany had to disarm and to give up her huge army. She was only allowed to keep a small army of one hundred thousand. The result was that outwardly there was disarmament and in reality a great quantity of arms were hidden away. Huge 'private armies' grew up, that is, volunteers belonging to different parties. The conservative nationalists volunteer army was called the *Steel helmets*; the Communists Workers' Volunteers were the *Red Front*; and later Hitler's followers formed the 'Nazi' troops.

I have told you a lot about these early post-war years in Germany, and I might tell you much more to show how revolution hovered in the air and fought with the counter-revolution. In different parts of Germany, in Bavaria and Saxony, there were also risings. Much the same conditions prevailed in Austria, which the peace treaty reduced to a tiny fraction of its former self. This small country, with a huge capital city, Vienna, was entirely German, in language and culture. It became a republic on November 12, 1918, the day after the Armistice. It wanted to become a part of Germany but the Allied Powers strictly prohibited this although on the face of it, this is a natural thing to do. This proposed union of Austria and Germany is referred to by the German word 'anschluss', and it is one of the problems of to-day. Another Austrian problem is that of the Tyrol, part of which containing German-Austrians has been annexed by Italy.

In Austria, as in Germany, the Social Democrats were in power to begin with, but, fearful and lacking confidence in themselves, they followed a policy of compromise with the bourgeois parties. The result has been a great weakening of the Social Democrats and the passing of the government into other hands. As in Germany, private armies grew up, and finally a reactionary dictatorship was established. For a long time there was a conflict between the socialist city of Vienna and the conservative farmers of the countryside. The Socialist Vienna Municipality has become famous for their fine housing and other schemes for the working classes.

In Hungary a revolution broke out as early as October 3, 1918, five weeks before the war ended. In November a republic was proclaimed. Four months later, in March, 1919, a second revolution took place. This was a Soviet revolution under the leadership of a Communist, Bela Kun, who had been associated with Lenin previously. A Soviet government was established and it was in power for some months. Thereupon the conservative and reactionary elements in the country invited a Rumanian army to come to their help. The Rumanians came most willingly, helped to crush Bela Kun's government, and then settled down to loot the country. They only left when the Allied Powers threatened action against them. As the Rumanians withdrew, the Hungarian conservatives organised a private army or hands of volunteers to terrorise over all the liberal or advanced elements in the country, so as to prevent any further attempt at revolution. Thus began in 1919 the 'White Terror' of Hungary, as it is called, which is considered 'one of the bloodiest pages of post-war history.' Hungary is still partly feudal, and these feudal landlords combined with the big industrialists, who had made huge fortunes during the war, to murder and terrorise not only communists but workers generally and social democrats and liberals and pacifists and even Jews. Even since then Hungary has

been under a reactionary dictatorship. There is a parliament for show purposes but the ballot is open, that is voting for members of parliament is public, and the police and the army see to it that only persons welcome to the dictatorship are elected. No public meetings on political questions are tolerated.

I have considered in this letter some of the post-war happenings in Central Europe, the reactions of the war and defeat and the Russian Revolution on what used to be the Central Powers. The amazing economic effects of the war, and how they have brought capitalism to its present unhappy pass, we shall have to deal with separately. (The net result of what I have written in this letter is that social revolution seemed to be imminent in Europe during those post-war days. This fact helped Soviet Russia because none of the great imperialist powers dared to attack it whole-heartedly for fear of the bad effect on its own working class. The revolution however did not come off, except in little bits which were crushed. In the crushing and the avoiding of this social revolution, the Social Democrats played a prominent part, although their whole party was based on the theory of such a social revolution. It would appear that these Social Democrats hoped or believed that capitalism would die a natural death. Therefore, instead of attacking it vigorously they helped to preserve it for the time being. Or it may be that their huge and wealthy party machine was comfortable enough and too much involved in the existing order to take the risk of social upheaval. They tried to steer a middle course, with the result that they bungled the job completely and lost even what they had. Recent events in Germany have made this clearer than ever.)

Another factor dominating these post-war years is the growth of the spirit of violence. It is curious that while in India the Gospel of non-violence was being preached, nearly all over the world, violence was in action, naked and unabashed and was being glorified. The war was largely responsible for this, and afterwards

the clashes between different class interests. As these clashes became more obvious and intense, violence grew. Liberalism almost disappeared and nineteenth century democracy fell into disfavour. Dictators appeared on the scene.

I have dealt with the defeated powers in this letter. The victorious powers had similar troubles, though England and France escaped having any rising or upheaval as in Central Europe. Italy had a great upheaval which had strange results which deserve separate treatment.

A NEW WAY OF PAYING OLD DEBTS

June 15, 1933

We find thus that after the World War Europe, as indeed the whole world to some extent, was like a seething cauldron. The peace of Versailles and the other treaties did not improve matters. The new map of Europe settled some old national problems by freeing the Poles and the Czechs and the Baltic peoples. But at the same time it created fresh national problems by putting part of the Austrian Tyrol under Italy, and part of Ukraine under Poland, and by other unhappy territorial distributions in Eastern Europe. The most curious and irritating arrangement was that of the Polish Corridor and Danzig. Central and Eastern Europe was 'balkanised' by the creation of many small new states, which meant more frontiers, more customs barriers, more mutual hatreds.

Apart from these treaties of 1919, Rumania managed to take Bessarabia, which used to be a part of south-west Russia. This has since been a matter of dispute and argument between the Soviets and Rumania. Bessarabia has been called "the Alsace-Lorraine on the Dnieper."

A far bigger question than that of territorial changes was that of Reparations, that is the amount defeated Germany was to be made to pay to the victorious Allies as costs and damages caused by the war. No exact sum was laid down in the treaty of Versailles, but subsequent conferences fixed these reparations at the enormous sum of £6,600,000,000 to be paid in annual instalments. It was impossible for any country to pay this vast sum, much less could defeated and exhausted Germany do so.

Germany protested without result and then, having no choice, paid two or three instalments by borrowing from the United States. She did so to gain time and then get the whole question reconsidered. It was obvious to her and to most others that she could not go on paying huge sums for generations.

Very soon Germany's financial system went to pieces, and the Government did not have enough money either to pay external debts, like reparations, or even to meet internal obligations. Payments to other countries had to be made in gold. When these payments were not made on the fixed dates, there was default. Within Germany, however, the government could pay in currency notes and so they adopted the device of printing more and more paper notes. By printing paper notes money is not created; what is created is credit. People use these notes, because they know that they can get them changed for gold or silver if they want to. Behind these notes there is always some amount of gold kept in the banks to keep up the value of the notes. Paper money thus performs a very useful function, as it saves a lot of gold and silver from day to day use and increases credit. But if a government goes on printing paper money and issuing these notes without any limit and without any regard to the amount of gold in the banks, then the value of this money is bound to fall. The more the printing the less the value, the less does it perform its function of credit. This process is called inflation. This is exactly what happened in Germany in 1922 and 1923. The German government wanting more money for its expenses printed more notes. This resulted in sending up prices of everything else, but in lowering the price of the German mark itself as compared to the pound, the dollar, or the franc. So the government had to print more marks and again the mark fell. This process went on to fantastic lengths till a dollar or pound came to be worth billions of paper marks. In fact the paper mark almost ceased to have any value. A postage stamp for a letter cost a million

paper marks! And all other prices were similarly graded and constantly changing.

This German inflation and astounding fall of the mark did not take place of its own accord. It was deliberately brought about by the German government to help them to get out of their financial difficulties and to a large extent it did so. For the government and municipalities and other debtors easily paid off all their internal German debts with the worthless paper marks. Of course they could not pay off debts in and to foreign countries in this way, as no one there would accept their paper money. In Germany they could enforce acceptance by law. In this way the government and every debtor got rid of a troublesome burden of debt. But they did so at a tremendous cost of suffering. All the people suffered during this inflation, but most of all the middle classes suffered, for most of these people were getting fixed salaries or had other fixed incomes. Of course as the mark fell these salaries went up but they never went up enough to keep pace with the falling mark. The lower middle classes were almost wiped off by this inflation, and we have to remember this when we consider the remarkable happenings in Germany in subsequent years. For these discontented *declassé* middle classes now formed a powerful army of the disaffected, full of revolutionary possibilities. They drifted into the private armies that were growing up round the principal parties, and most of them went to Hitler's new party, the National-Socialists or Nazis.

The old mark having become perfectly useless for any purpose was then abolished and a new currency the 'rentenmark' was introduced. There was no inflation with this and it was worth its value in gold. So Germany, after making a clean sweep of her lower middle classes, returned again to a stable currency.

Germany's financial troubles led to important international consequences. There was a default in paying reparations to the Allies. These reparations were being divided up between these Allied Powers, the

biggest share going to France. Russia was not taking part of them; in fact she renounced any claim that she might have had. When the German default occurred France and Belgium took military possession of the Ruhr area in Germany. The Allies were already in possession of the Rhineland under the Versailles treaty. In January, 1923, an additional area was occupied by the French and Belgians (England refused to join in this undertaking). This Ruhr area adjoins the Rhineland and contains rich coalfields and factories. The French wanted to pay themselves by taking possession of the coal and other articles produced. But here a difficulty presented itself. The German government decided to oppose the French occupation by passive resistance, and they called upon the mine-owners and workers of the Ruhr to stop work and not help the French in any way. They further helped these mine-owners and industrialists by paying them millions of marks for the losses caused to them. After nine or ten months, which were very expensive both for the French and the Germans, the German government withdrew passive resistance and began co-operating with the French in working the mines and factories in the area. In 1925 the French and Belgians left the Ruhr.

German passive resistance had broken down in the Ruhr, but it had demonstrated that the reparations question must again be considered and more reasonable figures of payments fixed. So conferences and commissions followed each other in quick succession, and fresh plans were evolved one after another. There was the Dawes Plan in 1924, and five years later, in 1929, the Young Plan, and three years later in 1932, it was practically acknowledged by all concerned that no further payments could be made for reparations, and the whole idea was scraped.

For these few years from 1924 Germany made regular payments of reparations. But how was this done when Germany had no money and was not solvent? Simply by borrowing from the United States

of America. The Allies (England, France, Italy, etc.), owed money to America, the money they had borrowed in war-time; Germany owed money to the Allies as reparations. So America lent money to Germany, and Germany could pay the Allies, so that the Allies might in their turn pay America. It was a very pretty arrangement, and everybody seemed to be satisfied! Indeed there was no other way of getting payments. Of course the whole round of borrowings and lendings depended on one little thing—America continuing to lend money to Germany. If this stopped, the whole arrangement collapsed.

These lendings and borrowings did not mean actual payments in hard cash; they were all paper transactions. America credited a certain sum to Germany, Germany transferred this to the Allies, and the Allies re-transferred it to America. The actual money did not move at all, only a number of book entries were made. Why did America go on lending to impoverished countries which could not even pay the interest on previous debts? America did so to help them to carry on somehow and prevent them from going bankrupt, for America feared the collapse of Europe, which, apart from other bad consequences, would have meant the end of the whole debt due to America. So like a prudent creditor, America kept her debtors alive and functioning. But after some years America got rather tired of this policy of continuous lending, and it put an end to it. Immediately the whole structure of reparations and debts came down with a crash and there were defaults, and all the nations of Europe and America fell into a morass in which they are still struggling. Of this I shall have more to say later.

Reparations were thus a problem which shadowed Europe for over a dozen years after the war. And at the same time there was the question of war debts, that is the debts of countries other than Germany. As I told you in a letter dealing with the World War, England and France financed the war in the early days and lent

money to their smaller allies; then France's resources were exhausted and she could lend no more. England, however, continued lending. Later England collapsed financially and could lend no more. Only the United States could do so and they lent generously and with advantage to themselves, to England, France and other Allies. Thus at the end of the War some countries owed money to France. Many were the debtors of England; and all allied countries owed large sums to America. America was the only country that owed money to no other country. It was then a great creditor nation. It had taken up England's old position and become the money-lender to the world. Some figures will perhaps make this clearer. Before the war America was a debtor nation owing three billion dollars to other countries. (I use the word billion in the American sense, that is, a thousand million. In England it usually means a million million). By the time the war had ended, this debt had been wiped off and instead America had advanced huge sums of money. In 1926 America was a creditor nation to the tune of twenty--five billion dollars.

These war debts were a tremendous burden on the debtor countries, England, France, Italy, etc., as the debts were all official debts for which the governments were responsible. They tried to get special favourable terms from America and some concessions were obtained, but still the burden continued. So long as Germany paid reparations, these payments (which were really American credits) were transferred to America by the debtor countries. But when reparations became irregular or stopped coming it became very difficult to pay the debts. The European debtor countries tried to connect reparations and war debts; they said that both must be considered together and if one stops the other must automatically stop also. America, however, refused to connect the two. She said that she had lent money and she wanted it back, quite apart from the question of reparations from Germany which stood

upon a separate footing. This attitude of America was very much resented in Europe, and hard things were said of her. She was Shylock and wanted her pound of flesh, it was said. It was stated, in France especially that the money borrowed from America had been spent in a common undertaking, the war, and therefore should not be looked upon as an ordinary debt. The Americans on the other hand were greatly disgusted with the after-war rivalries and intrigues in Europe. They saw France and England and Italy continue to spend vast sums on their armies and navies, and even lend money to some of the smaller countries for arming. If these countries of Europe had so much money for armaments why should they, the Americans, let them off their debts? If they did so probably this money would also be thrown into armaments. So argued America, and she stuck to her claims on the debts. This question is still unsettled and is being discussed for the tenth or twentieth time as I write this.

As with the reparations, it was difficult enough to pay the war debts anyhow. International debts can either be paid in gold or in goods or services (like transport, shipping and many other services). It was impossible to pay these huge sums in gold; there was not enough gold to be had. And payment in goods and services became almost impossible also, both for reparations and debts, as America and the European countries set up huge tariff barriers which kept out foreign goods. This created an impossible situation and was the real difficulty. And yet no country was prepared to lower the tariff barriers or take goods in payment for the sum due to it, as this meant injury to the home industries. It was a curious and vicious circle.

Europe was not the only continent which owed money to the United States of America. American bankers and businessmen invested enormous sums of money in Canada and in Latin America (that is, South and Central America and Mexico). These Latin American countries were greatly impressed during the

World War with the power of modern industry and machinery. So they concentrated on industrial development and money, of which there was an abundance in the United States, poured in from the north. They borrowed so much that they could hardly pay the interest on it! Dictators appeared everywhere, and so long as the borrowing went on, it was well, just as it was well so long as America went on lending to Germany. When the lending to Latin America stopped, there was a crash there, as in Europe.

To give you some idea of American investments and how they grew rapidly in Latin America, I shall give you two figures. In 1926 these investments amounted to four and a quarter billion dollars (that is a thousand million). Three years later in 1929 they amounted to over five and a half billions.

So America in these post-war years was undoubtedly the banker of the world; rich, prosperous, and bursting with wealth. She dominated the world, and her people looked upon Europe, and much more so on Asia, rather contemptuously as old and quarrelsome continents in their dotage. Try to form some idea of American wealth in these peak days of prosperity in the nineteen-twenties. In the fifteen years from 1912 to 1927 the total national wealth of America went up from \$ 187,239,000,000 to \$ 400,000,000,000. The population in 1927 was about 117 millions, and the wealth per head of population was \$ 3,428. Progress has been so rapid that these figures are changing from year to year. In a previous letter when comparing the national incomes of India and other countries I gave a much lower figure for America. That was for annual income not wealth and it was probably for an earlier year. The figure for 1927 given above is based on a statement made in November, 1926, by President Coolidge of America.

Some other figures may interest you. They are all for 1927. The number of families in the United

States were twenty-seven million. They owned 15,923,000 electrically lighted homes, and 17,780,000 telephones were in use. There were 19,237,171 motor cars in use, and this figure was 81 per cent. of the world total. America produced 87 per cent. of the world's automobiles; 71 per cent. of the world's petroleum; and 43 per cent. of the world's coal. And yet the population of the United States was only 6 per cent. of the world's population. The general standard was thus very high, and yet it was not as high as it might have been for wealth was concentrated in the hands of a few thousand millionaires and multi-millionaires. This 'Big Business' ruled the country. They chose the president; they made the laws, and often enough they broke the laws. There was tremendous corruption in this Big Business, but the American people did not mind so long as there was general prosperity.

I have given you these figures of American prosperity in the nineteen-twenties partly to show you to what heights modern industrial civilization has taken a country as compared with backward non-industrial countries like India and China, and partly to contrast this prosperity with the subsequent crisis and collapse in America, about which I shall tell you later.

This crisis was to come later. Right up to 1929 America seemed to have escaped the ills of suffering Europe and Asia. The defeated powers were in a very bad way. I have told you something about Germany's misery. Most of the small countries of Central Europe, and especially Austria, were in an even worse state. Austria also suffered from inflation, and so did Poland, and both had to change their currencies.

But this trouble was not confined to the defeated countries. Even the victorious countries were gradually involved in it. It had always been known that to be a debtor was not a good thing. A new and strange realisation now came: that it was not a good thing either to be a creditor! For the victorious powers, to whom

Germany owed reparations, got into great difficulties because of these reparations, and the very act of receiving them got them into further trouble. Of this I must tell you in my next letter.

THE STRANGE BEHAVIOUR OF MONEY

June 16, 1933

One of the most remarkable characteristics of the post-war period is the strange behaviour of money. Before the war, money in each country had a more or less fixed value. Each country had its own currency, such as the rupee in India, the pound in England, the dollar in America, the frank in France, the mark in Germany, the rouble in Russia, the lira in Italy, and so on; and these currencies bore a steady relation to each other. They were connected to each other by what is called the international gold standard, this is, each currency had a definite gold value. Within the boundaries of each country its own currency was good enough, but not so outside. The connecting link between two currencies was gold and international payments or settlements were thus made in gold. So long as the currencies had fixed gold values, they could not vary much as gold is a fairly stable metal so far as value is concerned.

War-time necessities, however, made the warring governments leave this gold standard and thus made their currencies cheaper. There was a measure of inflation. This was helpful in carrying on business but it upset the international relations of currencies. During the war the world was divided up into two huge camps, the Allied camp and the German camp, and within each camp there was co-operation and co-ordination, and everything was subordinated to the war. Difficulties arose after the war, and the changing economic conditions, and the mutual distrusts of nations resulted in extraordinary behaviour of different

currencies. The whole money system of to-day is largely credit; a bank note and a cheque are both promises to pay which are accepted as good money. Credit depends on confidence, and when confidence goes credit goes with it. This is one of the reasons why the money system has been misbehaving so much during the past ten years or more, as the troubled conditions of Europe have shaken all confidence. The modern world is also inter-dependent, each part is intimately connected with the other and there are ever so many international activities. This means that the troubles of one country have their immediate reactions in other countries. If the German mark falls or a German bank fails, the people of London and Paris and New York may be put out by it in many ways.

Because of these and other reasons, which I shall not trouble you with, currency or money difficulties rose in nearly all countries, and the more advanced the country industrially, the greater often the difficulty. For industrial advance meant a highly complicated and delicate international structure. Obviously a backward and isolated place like Tibet would not be affected by the behaviour of the mark or pound. But the fall in the value of the dollar might immediately upset Japan.

Then again in each industrial country the interests of various groups were different. Thus some wanted cheap money and inflation (not of course a limitless inflation as had taken place in Germany), while some wanted the exact opposite, deflation, that is a high gold value of money. For instance, the creditors, the bankers and the like were in favour of a high money value as they were owed money; the debtors naturally wanted cheaper money to pay their debts. The industrialists and manufacturers were in favour of cheap money as they were usually the debtors of the bankers and, more important still, this encouraged the sale of their goods abroad. Cheaper British money would mean that the price of British goods would be less as compared to German or American or other foreign goods in the

foreign market, and this would result in an advantage to British industrialists and a greater sale of their goods. So you will notice that different groups pulled different ways, the principal tug-of-war being between the industrialists and the bankers. I am trying to put this as simply as I can. As a matter of fact there were many complicating factors.

Both in France and Italy there was inflation and the franc and lira fell in value. The old value of the franc used to be about 25 to the pound sterling (as the British pound is called). This fell to 275 to the pound. Eventually it was fixed at about 120 to the pound.

After the war when America stopped helping England, the pound fell in value a little. England was then faced by a difficulty. Was she to accept this natural fall in the value of the pound and fix the pound at this new value? This would have helped industry by cheapening goods, but it would have caused loss to the bankers and creditors. More important still, it would have put an end to London's position as the financial centre of the world. New York would then step into this position and borrowers would go there instead of coming to London. The alternative was to force up the pound to its original value. This would raise the prestige of the pound and London would continue its financial leadership. But industry would suffer and, as the event proved, many other undesirable things would happen.

The British government chose the latter course in 1925 and raised the pound to its former gold value. Thus they sacrificed to some extent their industry to their bankers. The real issue before them was a more important one still, for it vitally affected the continuance of their empire. If London lost the financial headship of the world, the various parts of the empire would not look to it for leadership or help and the empire would gradually melt away. So that this question became one of imperial policy and this wider imperialism won at the cost of British industry and immediate

domestic interests. It was in this same way, you may remember, that imperial considerations induced Britain to encourage the industrialisation of India after the war even at some cost to Lancashire and British industry.

Thus a brave attempt was made by Britain to keep leadership and empire, but it was an attempt which proved most costly and it was foredoomed to failure. The British government, or any other government, could not control the inevitable developments of economic destiny. The pound had regained its ancient prestige for a while but at the cost of a growing paralysis of industry. Unemployment grew and the coal industry was especially hard hit. The deflation of the pound (as this process of raising its gold value is called) was largely responsible for this. There were other reasons also. Some German coal had been received in payment for reparations, and this meant that less British coal was required, which resulted in greater unemployment in the coal mines. Thus the creditor and victor countries came to realise that it was not an unmixed blessing to receive a tribute of this kind from the defeated country. The British coal industry was also very badly organised. It was split up into hundreds of small companies, and could not easily compete with the larger and better organised groups on the continent and in America.

As the coal industry went from bad to worse, the mine-owners decided to reduce the wages of their workers. This was fiercely resented by the miners and they had the support of the workers in other industries. The whole labour movement in Britain got ready to fight on behalf of the miners, and a 'Council of Action' was formed. Previous to this a powerful 'triple alliance' had been formed between the three great trade unions, the miners, the railway workers, and the transport workers, which comprised millions of well organised and trained workers. This aggressive attitude of the working class rather frightened the government and they postponed the crisis by giving a subsidy to the

mine-owners to enable them to continue the old scale of wages for another year. An enquiry commission was also appointed. But nothing came of all this and next year in 1926 the crisis came again when the mine-owners wanted to reduce wages. This time the government were ready for the fight with labour; they had made every preparation for it during the past months.

The coal-owners decided to lock-out the miners because they would not agree to a wage-cut. This precipitated a general strike in England called by the Trade Union Congress. There was a remarkable response to this call and almost all organised workers throughout the country stopped working. The life of the country was brought almost to a standstill, railways did not run, newspapers could not be printed and most other activities stopped. Government managed to carry on some essential services with the help of volunteers. The general strike began on midnight May 3-4, 1926. After ten days the moderate leaders of the Trade Union Congress, who had no love for this kind of revolutionary strike, suddenly called it off on the pretext of some vague promise made to them. The miners were left in the lurch, but they carried on for many long and weary months. They were starved out and beaten down in the end. This was a signal defeat not only for the miners, but for British workers generally. Wages were lowered in many cases, hours of work were increased in some industries and the living standards of the working class went down. The government took advantage of its victory to pass new laws to weaken labour, and especially to prevent any general strike in the future. This general strike of 1926 failed because of the irresolution and weakness of the labour leaders and their want of preparation for it. Indeed their whole object was to avoid it and when they could not do so they ended it at the first opportunity. On the other hand, the government was fully prepared and it received the support of the middle classes.

The general strike in England and the long coal

lock-out created great interest in Soviet Russia and the Russian trade unions sent very large sums of money specially subscribed by the Russian workers to help the English miners.

Labour had been crushed in England for the moment. But this was no solution of the problem of a declining industry and growth of unemployment. Unemployment meant wide spread suffering among the workers; it also meant a great burden on the state, for a system of unemployment insurance had grown up in many countries. It was recognised that it was the duty of the state to support a worker who was unemployed for no fault of his own. So some relief or doles were given to the registered unemployed and this meant the expenditure of huge sums of money by the government and by local bodies.

Why was all this happening? Why was industry deteriorating, trade languishing, unemployment increasing, and conditions worsening not only in England but in almost all countries? Conference after conference was held, the statesmen and the rulers were obviously keen on improving conditions, but no success came to them. It was not as if some natural calamity had occurred like an earthquake, or floods, or want of rains causing famine and suffering. The world was getting on in much the same way as before. There was actually more food and more factories and more of everything required, and yet there was more human misery. Something was obviously very radically wrong to bring about this contrary result. There was gross mismanagement somewhere. Socialists and communists said that it was all the fault of capitalism which was on its last legs. They pointed to Russia where, though many troubles and difficulties existed, there was no unemployment at least.

These questions are rather intricate and doctors and pundits differ greatly as to the remedies for human ailments. But let us nevertheless look at them and examine some of their outstanding features.

The world to-day is becoming, and has largely become a single unit, that is to say that life, activities, production, distribution, consumption, etc., all tend to be international and world wide, and this tendency is increasing. Trade, industry, the money system are also largely international. There is the closest connection and interdependence between different countries and an event in one of them has reactions in others. In spite of all this internationalism, governments and their policies continue to be narrowly nationalistic. Indeed this narrow nationalism has become worse and more aggressive during the post-war years and is to-day a dominating factor in the world. The result is a continuous conflict between the actual international events of the world and the nationalistic policy of governments. You may look upon the international activities of the world as a river flowing down to the sea, and the national policies as attempts to stop it and dam it and divert it and even to make it flow backwards. It is obvious that the river is not going back nor is it going to be stopped. But it may occasionally be diverted a little or a dam may result in floods. So these nationalism of to-day are interfering with the even flow of the river and creating floods and backwaters and stagnant pools, but they cannot stop the ultimate progress of the river.

In trade and the economic sphere we thus have what is called 'economic nationalism.' This means that a country is to sell more than it buys, and to produce more than it consumes. Every nation wants to sell its goods, but then who is to buy? For every sale there must be a seller as well as a buyer. It is obviously absurd to have a world of sellers only. And yet this is the basis of economic nationalism. Every country puts up tariff walls, economic barriers to keep out foreign goods, and at the same time it wants to develop its own foreign trade. These tariff walls interfere with and kill international trade on which the modern world is built up. As trade languishes, industry suffers and unemployment increases. This again results in a fiercer attempt to

keep out foreign goods, which are supposed to interfere with home industries, and tariff walls are raised higher. International trade suffers still more and the vicious circle goes on.

The modern industrial world has really advanced beyond the stage of nationalism. The whole machinery of production of goods and distribution does not fit in the nationalist structure of governments and countries. The shell is too small for the growing body inside and it cracks.

These tariffs and obstacles in the way of trade really profit some classes only in each country but as these classes are dominant in their respective countries they shape the country's policy. So each country tries to overreach the other and in the result all of them suffer together, and national rivalries and hatreds increase. Repeated attempts are made to settle mutual differences by conferences, and the best of intentions are expressed by the statesmen of different countries, but success eludes them. Does this not remind you of the repeated attempts to settle the communal problem, the Hindu-Muslim-Sikh problems, in India? Perhaps in both the cases failure is due to wrong assumptions and to wrong premises, as well as wrong objectives.

These classes that profit by tariffs and other methods of encouraging economic nationalism, such as bounties and subsidies and special railway freights, etc., are the owning and manufacturing classes who profit by these protected home markets. Vested interests are thus built up under protection and tariffs and, like all vested interests, they object very strongly to any change which might injure them. This is one of the reasons why tariffs, once introduced, stay on, and why economic nationalism goes on in the world although most people are convinced that it is bad for everybody. It is not easy to put an end to vested interests once created, and it is still less easy for any nation to take a solitary lead in such a matter. If all the countries agreed to act together and put an end to, or reduce greatly, the tariffs, perhaps

it might be done. Even then there would be difficulties as industrially backward countries would suffer as they would not be able to compete on equal terms with advanced countries. New industries are often built up under the shade of a protective duty.

Economic nationalism discourages and prevents trade between nations. Thus the world market suffers. Each nation becomes a monopoly area with a protected market; the free market goes. Within each nation also monopolies increase and the free and open market tends to disappear. Big trusts, big factories, big shops swallow up the smaller producers and the petty shop-keepers, and thus put an end to competition. In America, Britain, Germany, Japan and other industrial countries these national monopolies developed at a tremendous pace and power was thus concentrated in few hands. Petrol, soap, chemical goods, armaments, steel, banking and ever so many other things were monopolised. All this has a curious result. It is the inevitable consequence of the growth of science and the development of capitalism and yet it cuts at the root of this very capitalism. For capitalism began with the world market and the free market. Competition was the breath of life of capitalism. If the world market goes and so also the free market and competition within national boundaries, the bottom is knocked out of this old capitalist structure of society. What will take its place is another matter, but it seems that the old order cannot continue for long with these mutually contradictory tendencies.

Science and industrial progress have gone far ahead of the existing system of society. They produce enormous quantities of food and the good things of life and capitalism does not know what to do with them! Indeed it sits down often to destroy them or to limit production. And so we have the extraordinary spectacle of abundance and poverty existing side by side. If capitalism is not advanced enough for modern science and technology some other system must be evolved more in keeping with science. The only other alternative is

to strangle science and keep it from going ahead. But that would be rather silly and in any event it is hardly conceivable.

It is not surprising that with economic nationalism, and the growth of monopolies and national rivalries, and the other products of a decaying capitalism, there should be trouble all over the world. Modern imperialism itself is a form of this capitalism for each imperialist power tries to solve its national problems by exploiting other people. This again leads to rivalries and conflicts between the imperialist powers. Everything seems to lead to conflict in the topsy-turvy world of to-day!

I began this letter by telling you that money had behaved strangely during the post-war period. Can we blame money when everything else is behaving in a most extraordinary way?

MOVE AND COUNTER-MOVE

June 18, 1933

My last two letters have dealt with economic and currency questions. These subjects are supposed to be very mysterious and difficult to understand. It is true that they are not easy and they require hard thinking, but they are not so terrible after all; and economists and experts are partly responsible for the air of mystery that surrounds these subjects. In the old days priests used to have a monopoly of mystery, and they imposed their will on the ignorant populace by all manner of rites and ceremonials, often in an old language which few understood, and by making it appear that they were in communication with unseen powers. The power of priestcraft is very much less to-day and in industrial countries it has almost gone. In place of the priests have arisen the expert economists and bankers and the like who talk in a mysterious language, consisting chiefly of technical terms, which a layman finds it difficult to understand. And so the average man was to leave the decision of these questions to the experts. But the experts often attach themselves, consciously or unconsciously, to the ruling classes and serve their interests. And experts differ.

It is as well, therefore, that we should all try to understand something about these economic questions which seem to dominate politics and everything else to-day. There are many ways of dividing human beings into groups and classes. One possible way would be to have two classes: the drifters, who have little will of their own and allow themselves to be carried hither and thither like a straw on the surface of the waters,

and those who try to play an effective role in life and to influence their surroundings. For the latter class, knowledge and understanding are essential, for effective action can only be based on these. Mere good-will or pious hopes are not enough. When there is a natural calamity, or an epidemic, or a failure of the rains, or almost any misfortune, we often see, not only in India but in Europe also, people praying for relief. If the prayer soothes them and gives them confidence and courage, it is a good thing and no one need object to it. But the idea that prayer will stop an epidemic of disease is giving place to the scientific notion that the root causes of disease should be wiped out by sanitation and other means. When there is a breakdown in the machinery of a factory or there is a puncture in the tyre of a car, who ever heard of people sitting down and just hoping or piously wishing or even praying that the break right itself or the puncture mend itself? They set to work and mend the machinery and the tyre and soon the machinery is functioning again and the car running smoothly along the road.

So also in the human and the social machine we require, besides good-will, good knowledge of its working and its possibilities. This knowledge is seldom exact as it deals with indefinite things such as human wishes and desires and prejudices and wants, and these become still more indefinite when we deal with people in the mass, with society as a whole or with different classes of people. But study and experience and observation gradually bring order even in this rather indefinite mass, and knowledge grows, and with it grows our capacity to deal with our surroundings.

Now I should like to say something about the political aspect of Europe during these post-war years. The first thing that strikes one is the division of the continent into three parts: the victors of the war, the vanquished, and Soviet Russia. There were some small countries, like Norway and Sweden and Holland and Switzerland, which did not fall into any of these three

divisions but they were not important from the larger political point of view. Soviet Russia of course stood by herself with her workers' government, a source of continuous irritation and annoyance to the victorious powers. This irritation was caused not only by her system of government which was an invitation to revolution to workers in other countries, but also by her coming in the way of many of the designs of the victor powers in the east. I have already told you of the wars of the intervention during which, in 1919 and 1920, most of these victor powers tried to crush the Soviets. Soviet Russia however survived and the imperialist powers of Europe had to put up with her existence, but they did so with as little good-will or grace as possible. In particular, the old rivalry between England and Russia, dating from the Tsarist period, continued, and occasionally burst forth into alarms and incidents which threatened war. The Soviets were convinced that England was continually intriguing against them and trying to build up an anti-Soviet *bloc* of powers in Europe, and there were several war scares.

In western and central Europe the distinction between the victor powers and the defeated ones was very marked, and France especially represented the spirit of victory. The defeated countries were naturally dissatisfied with many of the provisions of the peace treaties, and, though they were powerless to do anything, they dreamed of future changes. Austria and Hungary were very sick countries and their condition seemed to worsen. Yugoslavia, on the other hand, was a Serbia bloated up, and had become a collection of incongruous elements and nationalities. It did not take many years for the different parts to get fed up with each other, and for a tendency to split up to develop. In Croatia (which is now a province of Yugoslavia) especially there is a strong movement for independence and this has been vigorously repressed by the Serbian government. Poland is big enough on the map now but its imperialists cherish extraordinary dreams of

stretching out to the Black Sea in the south and thus restoring the ancient Polish frontier of 1772. Meanwhile Poland comprises a part of the Russian Ukraine and this has been, and is still being, 'pacified' or 'polonised' by a reign of terror with torture, death penalties and many other barbarous punishments. These are some of the little fires that go on smouldering in east Europe. Their importance lies in the danger of the fire spreading.

Politically, and in a utilitary sense also, France was the dominant power in Europe in the after-war years. She had gained much of what she wanted in the shape of territory and the promise at least of reparations, but she was far from happy. A great fear haunted her, the fear of Germany becoming strong enough to fight her again and perhaps defeat her. The principal reason for this fear was the much bigger population of Germany. France is actually bigger in size than Germany and is perhaps even more fertile. Yet the population of France is under forty-one millions, and it is almost steady. The population of Germany is over sixty-two millions, and it is growing. The Germans have also the reputation of being an aggressive and a warlike nation and they have twice invaded France within living memory.

So the fear of a German revenge obsessed France and the foundation and governing idea of all her policy was 'security', the security for France to hold and keep what she had got. It was French military supremacy that kept in check all the countries disappointed by the Versailles peace, for a maintenance of this peace was considered necessary for French security. Further to strengthen her position, France built up a *bloc* of nations, who were also interested in maintaining the treaty of Versailles. These countries were Belgium, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia.

In this way France established her hegemony or leadership of Europe. This was not to the liking of England for England does not like any power, except

herself, to be predominant in Europe. There was a great cooling off in the love and friendship which England had for her ally France; France was criticised in the English press as selfish and hard-hearted, and friendly references were made to the old enemy Germany. One must forget and forgive, said the English people, and not allow ourselves to be governed in peace time by memories of war days. Admirable sentiments these were, and doubly admirable from the English point of view because they happened to fit in with English policy. It has been said by an Italian statesman, Count Sforza, that this is "a precious gift bestowed by divine grace upon the British people", for all classes to justify with the highest moral reasons any political advantage that may come to England or any diplomatic action that the British government might take.

From early in 1922 Anglo-French friction became a chronic feature of European politics and this has continued ever since. On the surface there are smiles and courteous words, and their statesmen and prime ministers meet frequently and get photographed together, but the two governments often pull in different directions. England was not in favour of the Allied occupation of the Ruhr valley, when Germany defaulted in the payment of reparations in 1922, but France had her way in spite of England. The British, however, did not take part in the occupation.

Another old ally, fell out with the French and there was constant friction between the two countries. The reason for this was the seizure of power by Mussolini in 1922 and his imperialist ambitions which were obstructed by France. Of Mussolini and fascism I shall tell you in my next letter.

The post-war years also brought into evidence certain disruptive tendencies in the British empire. I have discussed some aspects of this question in other letters. Here I shall only refer to one aspect. Both Australia and Canada were being drawn more and more into the American sphere of cultural and economic

influence, and one of the joint dislikes of all three countries were the Japanese and especially Japanese immigration. Australia is in especial danger of this as it has vast uninhabited areas and Japan is not far and has an overflowing population. Neither of these two dominions nor the United States liked England's alliance with Japan. England wanted to please America, for America was dominating the world both as creditor and otherwise, and also wanted to keep the empire going as long as possible. So she sacrificed the Anglo-Japanese alliance at the Washington Conference in 1922. I have written to you about this conference in my last letter on China. It was there that the Four-Power agreement and the Nine-Power Treaty were made. These treaties related to China and the Pacific coast but Soviet Russia, which was vitally interested was not invited, in spite of her protest.

This Washington Conference marks a change in England's eastern policy. So far England had relied on Japan to help her in the Far East and even in India if need arose. But now the Far East was becoming a very important part in world affairs and there were conflicts of interest between the different powers. China was rising, or so it seemed, and Japan and America were becoming more and more hostile to each other. Many people thought that the Pacific would be the chief centre of the next great war. As between Japan and America, England changed over the side of America, or rather it would be more correct to say, that she left the side of Japan. Her policy was definitely one of keeping friends with powerful and wealthy America, without making any commitments. Having ended the Japanese alliance, England started preparing for a possible far eastern war. She built enormous and very expensive docks at Singapore, and made of this place a great naval base. From this place she can control the traffic between the Indian ocean and the Pacific. She can dominate India and Burma on the one side, and the French and Dutch colonies on the other; and most

important of all, she can take effective part in a Pacific conflict whether it is against Japan or any other power.

This breaking up of the Anglo-Japanese alliance at Washington in 1922 isolated Japan. The Japanese were driven to look towards Russia and they began cultivating better relations with the Soviets. Three years later, in January, 1925, there was a treaty between Japan and the Soviet Union.

In the early years after the war Germany was treated by the victorious powers very much as an outcaste nation. Not finding much sympathy with these powers, and with a view to frightening them a little, she turned to Soviet Russia and made a treaty—the Treaty of Rapallo—with her in April, 1922. The negotiations for this had been secret and so when publicity was given to the treaty the Allied governments had a shock. The British government was especially put out as the English ruling class disliked the Soviet government intensely. It was really this realisation that if Germany was not treated well and conciliated she might go over to Russia, that brought about a change in British policy towards Germany. They became quite appreciative of Germany's difficulties and made friendly unofficial advances to her in many ways. They stood apart from the Ruhr adventure. All this was not because of a sudden love for Germany, but because of a desire to keep Germany away from Russia and in the anti-Soviet group of nations. This became the keystone of British policy for some years, and success came to them in 1925 at Locarno. A conference of the powers was held at Locarno, and for the first time since the war there was a real agreement between the victor powers and Germany on some points which were embodied in a treaty. There was no complete agreement; the tremendous question of reparations as well as other questions remained. But a good beginning was made and many mutual assurances and guarantees were given. Germany accepted her western French frontier as defined by the treaty of Versailles; as to her eastern

frontier, with the Polish corridor to the sea, she refused to accept it as final, but she promised to use peaceful means only in her attempts to get it changed. If any party broke the agreement then the others bound themselves to stand together to fight it.

Locarno was a triumph for British policy. It made Britain to some extent the arbiter in a dispute between France and Germany, and it brought Germany away from Russia. The chief importance of Locarno was indeed that it brought together the western European nations in an anti-Soviet *bloc*. Russia got nervous, and within a few months she countered with an alliance with Turkey. This Russo-Turkish treaty was signed in December, 1925, just two days after the decision of the League of Nations against Mosul, which decision, you may remember, was against Turkey. In September, 1926, (when we happened to be in Geneva and you used to toddle to the Ecole Internationale) Germany entered the League of Nations, and there was much embracing and hand shaking and everybody in the League smiled and complimented everybody else.

And so these moves and counter-moves went on between the European nations, often influenced by their domestic policies. In England a general election in December, 1923, resulted in a Conservative defeat and the Labour Party in Parliament, although it had no clear majority, formed the government for the first time. Ramsay MacDonald was the prime minister. This government had a brief life of nine and a half months. During this period, however, it came to an agreement with Soviet Russia and diplomatic and trade relations were established between the two countries. The Conservatives were opposed to any recognition of the Soviets and in the next British general election, which came within a year of the last one, Russia figured greatly. This was due to the fact that a certain letter, known as the *Zinoviev letter*, was made a trump card by the Conservatives in the election. I forget now what this letter contained, but apparently some intrigues were

suggested in it and secret activities in England recommended. Zinoviev was a leading Bolshevik in the Soviet government; he denied absolutely the letter and said that it must be a forgery. But still the Conservatives exploited the letter fully and, partly with its help, managed to win the election. A Conservative government was now formed with Stanley Baldwin as the prime minister. This government was repeatedly asked to investigate the truth or falsity of the 'Zinoviev letter' but it refused to do so. Subsequent disclosures in Berlin showed that it was a forgery made by a 'white' Russian, that is an anti-Bolshevik émigré Russian. The forgery however had done its work in England and put an end to one government and brought in another. By such trivial incidents are international affairs influenced!

The new Conservative government did not immediately break with Russia. They carried on outward relations with her, but they did so in a huff and were always finding fault, and no doubt there were many intrigues behind the scenes. The generous help that the Russian workers gave to the British miners during the great coal struggle of 1926 annoyed the Baldwin government very much. Later in the same year, a new development, this time in the Far East, was again a source of great irritation to them. A strong united national government suddenly appeared in China and this seemed to be on intimate terms with the Soviets. For many months the British were in great difficulties in China, and they had to swallow their prestige and do many things that they disliked. And then the Chinese movement, after a brief day of success, split up and went to pieces. The generals massacred and drove out the radical elements in the movement and preferred to place their reliance on the foreign bankers in Shanghai. This was a great defeat for Russia in the international game, and her prestige went down in China and elsewhere. For England it was a triumph and she sought to improve the occasion by pressing home the defeat on the Soviet. Apparently the anti-Soviet *bloc* was

again organised and efforts were made to encircle Russia.

About the middle of 1927 action was taken against the Soviets in different parts of the world. In April, 1927, on the same day, raids took place on the Soviet embassy in Peking and the Soviet consulate in Shanghai. Two different Chinese governments controlled these areas yet they acted together in this matter. It is a very unusual thing for an embassy to be raided and an ambassador insulted; almost inevitably it leads to war. It was the Russian belief that the Chinese governments had been made to act in this way by England and other anti-Soviet powers to force a war on Russia. But Russia did not fight. A month later, in May, 1927, another extraordinary raid on Russian trade offices took place, this time in London. This is called the 'Arcos' raid, as Arcos was the name of the Russian official trading company in England. This was also a great and, as the event proved, a wholly unjustified insult to another power. It was immediately followed by a break in diplomatic and trade relations between the two countries. Next month, in June, the Soviet minister in Poland was assassinated in Warsaw. (Four years earlier the Soviet minister in Rome had been assassinated in Lausanne). All these events, each coming quickly after the other, upset the nerves of the Russian people and they fully expected a combined attack on them by the imperialist powers. Russia had a big war scare, and in many of the western European countries the workers demonstrated in favour of Russia and against the war that seemed to be coming. The scare passed, and there was no war.

In that very year 1927 Soviet Russia celebrated on a big scale the tenth anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution. England and France were very hostile to Russia then, but Soviet Russia's friendship with eastern nations was shown by the fact that official delegations from Persia, Turkey, Afghanistan and Mongolia took part in the celebrations.

While these alarms and war preparations were going

on in Europe and elsewhere, there was also a great deal of talk of disarmament. The Covenant of the League of Nations had laid down that "members of the League recognise that the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations." Apart from laying down this pious principle, the League did nothing else at the time, but it called upon its Council to take necessary steps in this matter. Germany and the other defeated powers were of course disarmed by the peace treaties. The victor powers had undertaken to follow but repeated conferences failed to bring about any solid result. This was not surprising when each power aimed at a kind of disarmament which would result in making it relatively stronger than the others. To this naturally the others would not agree. The French stuck all along to their demand for security before disarmament.

Of the great powers neither American nor the Soviet Union were members of the League. Indeed the Soviet looked upon the League as a rival and hostile show, group of capitalist powers ranged against the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was itself considered (just as the British Empire is sometimes spoken of) as a League of Nations, as there were many republics federated together in the Union. The eastern nations also looked upon the League of Nations with suspicion and considered it a tool of the imperialist powers. Nevertheless America, Russia and nearly all countries took part in the League conferences to consider disarmament. In 1926, or perhaps early in 1927, the League appointed a Preparatory commission which was to prepare the ground for a great World Conference on Disarmament. This commission went on interminably, examining plan after plan, without any result. On behalf of the Soviet some very drastic proposals for disarmament were put forward but because they dealt with far-reaching disarmament they were considered to

be impractical. This Preparatory commission merged into the actual World Disarmament Conference last year, and this has now been going on for months and months, and there is endless talk, and people have almost forgotten that such a thing exist in Geneva!

America not only took part in these disarmament discussions but her interest in Europe and European affairs increased because of her dominating economic position in the world. All Europe was her debtor and she was interested in preventing the European countries from cutting each other's throats again, for, apart from higher considerations, what would happen to her debts and trade if this happened? The disarmament discussions not yielding any quick results, a new proposal to help in the preservation of peace appeared in 1928 as a result of talks between the French and American governments. This proposal bravely attempted to 'outlaw' war. The original idea was for a pact between France and America only; but this developed and ultimately included nearly all the nations of the world. In August, 1928, the pact was signed in Paris and it is therefore called the Paris Pact of 1928, or the Kellogg-Briand Pact, or simply as the Kellogg Pact. Kellogg was the American Secretary of State who took a lead in the matter, and Aristide Briand was the French foreign minister. The Pact was quite a short document condemning recourse to war for the solution of international controversies and renouncing war as an instrument of national policy in the mutual relations of the signatories of the Pact. This language, which is almost the wording of the Pact itself, sounds very fine and if honestly meant would put an end to war. But it was soon evident how insincere were the powers. Both the French and the English, and especially the English, made many reservations before signing, which practically nullified the Pact for them. The British government excepted from the Pact any warlike activity it might have to undertake for its empire, which meant that it could really make war just when it wanted to.

It declared a kind of British 'Monroe Doctrine' over its areas of dominance and influence.

While war was being thus 'outlawed' in public, a secret Anglo-French Naval Compromise took place in 1928. News of this managed to leak out and shocked Europe and America. This was evidence enough of the real state of affairs behind the scenes.

The Soviet Union accepted the Kellogg Pact and signed it. Its real reason for doing so was to prevent in this way, to some extent at least, the formation of an anti-Soviet *bloc* which might attack the Soviet under cover of the Pact. The British reservations to the Pact seemed to be especially aimed at the Soviet. In signing the Pact Russia took strong objection to these British and French reservations.

Russia was so keen on avoiding war that she took the additional precaution of having a special peace pact with her neighbours—Poland, Rumania, Esthonia, Latvia, Turkey and Persia. This is known as the Litvinor Pact. It was signed in February, 1929, six months before the Kellogg Pact became international law.

So these pacts and alliances and treaties continued to be made in a desperate attempt to steady a quarrelsome and collapsing world, as if such pacts or patch work on the surface can remedy a deep seated disease. This was a period, in the nineteen-twenties, when socialists and social democrats were often in office in European countries. The more they tasted of office and power the more they merged themselves into the capitalist structure. Indeed they became the best defenders of capitalism and often enough as keen imperialists as any conservative or other reactionary had been. To some extent the European world had quietened down after the revolutionary ferment of the early post-war years. Capitalism seemed to have adjusted itself to the new conditions for another period of time, and there appeared to be no immediate prospect of a revolutionary change anywhere.

So matters stood in the year 1929 in Europe.

MUSSOLINI AND FASCISM IN ITALY

June 21, 1933

I have brought up the outline of our story of Europe to 1929, that is just four years ago. But one important chapter has been omitted so far and I must go back a little to deal with it. This relates to events in Italy after the war. These events are important not so much because they tell us what happened in Italy, but because they are of a new kind and give a warning of a novel phase of activity and conflict all over the world. They have thus much more than a national significance, and I have therefore reserved them for a separate letter. So this letter will deal with Mussolini, one of the outstanding personalities of to-day, and the rise of fascism in Italy.

Even before the World War began Italy was in the grip of severe economic trouble. Her war with Turkey in 1911-12 had ended in her victory and the annexation of Tripoli in north Africa was very pleasing to her imperialists. But this little war had not done much good internally and had not improved the economic situation. Matters worsened and in 1914, on the eve of the World War, Italy seemed to be on the brink of revolution. There were many big strikes in the factories, and the workers were only kept in check by the moderate socialist leaders of labour, who succeeded in putting down the strikes. Then came the war. Italy refused to join her German allies, and tried to take advantage of her neutral position to squeeze out concessions from both sides. This attitude of offering her services to the highest bidder was not a very edifying one, but nations are quite callous and have a way of

behaving in a manner which would shame any private individual. The Allies, England and France, could offer the bigger bribe, both immediate cash and promise of territory, and so in May, 1915, Italy joined the war on the side of the Allies. I think I have told you of the secret treaty that was made subsequently allotting Italy Smyrna and a bit of Asia Minor. The Russian Bolshevik revolution came before this treaty could be ratified and upset the little game. This was one of the grievances of Italy and there was some dissatisfaction also at the peace treaties of Paris, a feeling that Italian 'rights' had been ignored. The imperialists and bourgeoisie had looked forward to the annexation and exploitation of fresh colonial territories and thereby easing the economic strain in their own country.

For conditions in Italy after the war were very bad, and the country was more exhausted than any other allied country. The economic system seemed to be breaking down, and the advocates of socialism as well as communism were increasing. There was of course the Russian Bolshevik example before them. On the one side there were the factory workers who were suffering from the economic conditions, on the other there were the large numbers of soldiers who had been demobilised and who were often without any job. Disorders grew, and the middle class leaders tried to organise these soldiers to oppose the growing power of the workers. In the summer of 1920 a crisis developed. The great Metal Workers' Union with a membership of half a million workers demanded higher wages. This demand was rejected and thereupon the workers decided to strike in a novel way, 'striking on the job' this was called. This meant that the workers went to their factories but instead of working did nothing and indeed obstructed work. This was the syndicalist programme which had been advocated by French labour long ago. The factory owners replied to this obstructionist strike by having a lock-out, that is closing their factories. The workers thereupon took possession of the factories and tried to

work them on socialist lines.

This action of the workers was definitely revolutionary and if persisted in was bound to lead to a social revolution or to failure. No middle position was possible for long. The Socialist Party was very strong in Italy then. Apart from its control of the trade unions, it controlled three thousand municipalities and sent 150 members, that is about one-third, to parliament. A powerful and well-established party with property and holding many positions in the state is seldom revolutionary. Even so this party, including its moderates; approved of the workers' action in taking possession of the factories. Having done so, it did nothing else. I did not want to go back but it did not dare to go ahead; it chose the middle path of least resistance and like all doubters and people who hesitate and cannot make up their minds at the right time, they suffered time to go ahead without them and were crushed in the process. Because of the hesitation of the labour leaders and radical parties, the workers' occupation of the factories fizzled out.

This encouraged the owning classes greatly. They had measured the strength of the workers and their leaders and found it less than they had expected, and now they planned a revenge to crush the labour movement and the Socialist Party. They turned especially to certain volunteer groups that had been formed in 1919, out of the demobilised soldiers, by Benito Mussolini. "*Fasci di combattimenti*", fighting groups, they were called and their chief function was to attack, whenever an opportunity arose, socialists and radicals and their institutions. Thus they would destroy the printing press of a socialist newspaper, or attack a municipality or co-operative association under socialist or radical control. The big industrialists and the upper bourgeoisie generally began to patronise and finance these 'fighting groups' in their fight against labour and socialism. Even the government was indulgent towards them as it wanted to break the power of the Socialist

Party.

Who was this Benito Mussolini who had organised these fighting groups or "*Fasci di combattimenti*", or fascists as we might call them for short? He was a young man then (he is just fifty now, having been born in 1883) who had had a varied and exciting career. His father was a blacksmith who was a socialist, and Benito therefore grew up with a socialist background. In his youth he became a fiery agitator and was expelled from several Swiss canton for his revolutionary propaganda. He attacked the moderate socialist leaders violently for their moderation. He openly approved of the use of bombs and other methods of terrorism against the state. During the Italian war with Turkey, most of the socialist leaders supported the war. Not so Mussolini, who opposed it and for some acts of violence he was even imprisoned for some months. He attacked the moderate socialist leaders bitterly for their support of the war and got them expelled from the Socialist Party. He became the editor of the socialist daily paper, the *Avanti* of Milan, and from day to day he advised workers to meet violence with violence. This incitement to violence was strongly objected to by the moderate Marxist leaders.

Then came the World War. For some months Mussolini was opposed to the war and advocated Italy's neutrality. He then, rather suddenly, changed his views, or his expression of them, and declared in favour of Italy joining the Allies. He left the socialist paper, and began editing a new paper which preached this new policy. He was expelled from the Socialist Party. Later he volunteered as a common soldier, served at the Italian front, and was wounded.

After the war Mussolini stopped calling himself socialist. He was at a loose end, disliked by his old party and having no influence with the working classes. He began to denounce pacifism and socialism and, at the same time, even the bourgeois state. He denounced every kind of state and, calling himself an 'individualist',

praised anarchy. This was what he wrote. What he did was to found Fascismo or Fascism in March, 1919, and enrolling the out-of-work soldiers in his fighting squads. Violence was the creed of these groups and, as the government seldom interfered, they grew in daring and aggression. Sometimes in the cities the working classes had a regular fight with them and drove them out. But the socialist leaders opposed this fighting spirit of the workers, and counselled them to meet the fascist terror peacefully with patient resignation. They hoped that fascism would thus exhaust itself. Instead of this the fascist groups gained in strength, helped as they were by funds from the rich people and the refusal to interfere of the government, while the masses lost all the spirit of resistance that they had possessed. There was not even an attempt to meet fascist violence by the labour weapon, the strike.

The fascists under Mussolini's leadership managed to combine two contradictory appeals. First and foremost they were the enemies of socialism and communism, and thus they gained the support of the propertied classes. But Mussolini was an old socialist agitator and revolutionary, and he was full of popular anti-capitalist slogans which were appreciated by many of the poorest classes. He had also learnt much of the technique of agitation from those experts in this business, the communists. Fascism thus became a strange mixture and could be interpreted in different ways. Essentially a capitalist movement it shouted many slogans, which were dangerous for capitalism. And thus it drew into its fold a motley crowd. The middle classes were its backbone, especially the unemployed lower middle class. Unemployed and unskilled workers, who were not organised in labour unions began to drift into it as it grew in power. For nothing succeeds like success. The fascists violently forced the shop-keepers to keep down prices, and thus gained the good-will of the poor also. Many adventurers of course flocked to the fascist standards. In spite of all this fascism remained a

minority movement.

And so, while socialist leaders doubted and hesitated and quarrelled among themselves, and there were divisions and splits in their party, fascist power grew. The regular army was very friendly to fascism and Mussolini had won over the army generals to his side. It was a remarkable feat for Mussolini to win to his side and hold together such diverse and conflicting elements, and to make each group within his ranks imagine that fascism was especially meant for it. The rich fascist looked upon him as the defender of his property, and considered his anti-capitalist speeches and slogans as empty phrases meant to delude the masses. The poor fascist believed that the real thing in fascism was this very anti-capitalism, and the rest was just intended to humour the rich people. So Mussolini tried to play one off against the other, and spoke in favour of the rich one day, and in favour of the poor the next day, but essentially he was the champion of the propertied classes, who were financing him, and who were out to destroy the power of labour and socialism, which had threatened them for so long.

At last in October, 1922, the fascist bands, directed by regular army generals, marched on Rome. The prime minister, who had so far tolerated fascist activities, now declared martial law. But it was too late and the king, himself was now on Mussolini's side. He (the king) vetoed the martial law decree, accepted his prime minister's resignation, and invited Mussolini to become the next prime minister and form his ministry. The fascist army reached Rome on October 30, 1922, and on the same day Mussolini arrived by train from Milan to become the prime minister.

Fascism had triumphed and Mussolini was in control. But what did he stand for, what was his programme and policy? Great movements are almost invariably built up round a clear-cut ideology which grows up round certain fixed principles and has definite objectives and programmes. Fascism had the unique

distinction of having no fixed principles, no ideology, no philosophy behind it, unless the mere opposition to socialism, communism and liberalism might be considered to be a philosophy. In 1920, a year after the fascist groups were formed, Mussolini declared about the fascists:

"not being tied down to any fixed principles, they proceed unceasingly towards one goal, the future well-being of the Italian people."

That of course is no distinctive policy for every person is prepared to stand by the well-being of his people. In 1922, just a month before the march on Rome, Mussolini said: "Our programme is very simple, we want to rule Italy." A frank avowal!

Mussolini has made this clearer still in an article he has recently written on the origin of Fascism in an Italian Encyclopædia. He says in it that he had no definite plans for the future when he embarked on his march on Rome. He was impelled to set out on his adventure by the dominant urge to act in a political crisis, the result of his past socialist training.

Fascism and communism, though violently opposed to each other, have some activities in common. But so far as principles and ideology are concerned there can be no greater contrast than between these two. For Fascism, we have seen, has no basic principles; it starts off from a blank. Communism or Marxism, on the other hand, is an intricate economic theory and interpretation of history, which requires the hardest mental discipline.

Although Fascism had no principles or ideals, it had a definite technique of violence and terrorism, and it had a certain outlook on the past which helps us a little to understand it. Its symbol was an old imperial Roman symbol which used to be carried in front of the Roman Emperors and magistrates. This was a bundle of rods (*fascēs* they were called, hence *Fascismo*) with an axe at the centre. The fascist organisation is also based on

the old Roman model, even the names used being the old ones. The fascist salute, called the *fascista*, is the old Roman salutation with the raised and outstretched arm. Thus the fascists looked back to imperial Rome for inspiration; they had the imperialist outlook. Their motto was: *No discussion—only obedience*, a motto suited to an army perhaps, but not certainly to a democracy. Their leader, Mussolini, was *il Duce*, the dictator. As their uniform they adopted a black-shirt and they were thus known as the black-shirts.

As the only positive programme of the fascists was to gain power, they had achieved this when Mussolini became prime minister. He then devoted himself to consolidating his position by crushing his opponents. An extraordinary orgy of violence and terrorism took place. Violence is a common enough phenomenon in history but usually it is considered a painful necessity and it is excused and explained. Fascism however did not believe in any such apologetic attitude towards violence. They accepted it and praised it openly, and they practised it even though there was no resistance to them. The opposition members in parliament were terrorised by beatings and a new elected law, quite changing the constitution, was forced through. In this way a great majority was obtained in favour of Mussolini.

It was strange that when they were actually in power and in command of the police and the state machine, the fascists should still continue their illegal violence. Yet they did so and of course they had a free field as the state police would not interfere. There were murders and torture and beatings and destruction of property, and especially there was a new method widely practised by these fascists. This was to give enormous doses of castor oil to anyone who dared to oppose them.

In 1924 Europe was shocked by the murder of Giacomo Matteotti a leading socialist who was a member of parliament. He spoke in parliament and criticised fascist methods during the election that had just been

held. Within a few days he was murdered. The murderers were tried for form's sake but they got off practically without punishment. A moderate leader of the liberals, Amendola, died as a result of a beating. A liberal ex-prime minister Nitti just escaped from Italy, but his house was destroyed. These are just a few instances which attracted world attention but the violence was continuous and wide-spread. And this violence was apart from and in addition to legal methods of suppression, and yet it was not just emotional mob violence. It was disciplined violence undertaken deliberately against all opponents, not only socialists and communists but peaceful and very moderate liberals also. Mussolini's order was that life should be rendered difficult "or impossible" to his opponents. It was faithfully carried out. No other party was to exist, no other organisation or institution. Everything must be fascist. And all the jobs must go to the fascists.

Mussolini became the all powerful dictator of Italy. He was not only the prime minister but at the same, he was the minister for foreign affairs, the interior, the colonies, war, marine, air and labour! He was practically the whole cabinet. The poor king retired into the background and was seldom heard of. Parliament was gradually pushed aside and became a pale shadow of itself. The Fascist Grand Council dominated the stage and Mussolini dominated the Fascist Grand Council.

Mussolini's early speeches on foreign affairs created a great deal of surprise and consternation in Europe. They were extraordinary speeches—bombastic, full of threats, and wholly unlike the diplomatic utterances of statesmen. He always seemed to be spoiling for a fight. He talked of Italy's imperial destiny, of Italian aeroplanes darkening the sky with their numbers, and he openly threatened his neighbour France on several occasions. France was of course far more powerful than Italy, but no one wanted to fight and so much that Mussolini said was tolerated. The League of Nations became a special target for Mussolini's satire and

contempt, although Italy was a member of it, and on one occasion, he defied it in the most aggressive way. Yet the League and the other powers put up with this. As the years have gone by, however, Mussolini's speeches have become less aggressive. He has toned down and talks of peace and disarmament now just like any other sedate politician. Wars are always dangerous for dictators whose power rests on force.

During the last ten years there have been many outward changes in Italy, and a tourist is favourably impressed by the appearance of order and punctuality everywhere. Rome, the imperial city, is being beautified, and many ambitious scheme for betterment have been undertaken. Visions of a new Roman Empire seem to float before Mussolini.

In 1929 the old quarrel between the Pope and the Italian government was ended by an agreement between Mussolini and the Pope's representative. Ever since the Italian kingdom made Rome its capital in 1871, the Pope had refused to recognise it or to give up his claim to the sovereignty of Rome. The Popes therefore, as soon as they were elected, retired into their enormous palace of the Vatican in Rome, which includes St. Peter's, and never came out of it on Italian territory. They made themselves voluntary prisoners. By the agreement of 1929 this little Vatican area in Rome was recognised as an independent and sovereign state. The Pope is the absolute monarch of this state and the total number of citizens are about five hundred! The state has its own courts, coinage, postage stamps and public services, and it has the most expensive little railway in the world. The Pope is no longer a self-made prisoner; he sometimes comes out of the Vatican. This treaty with the Pope has made Mussolini popular with the Catholics. The illegal phase of Fascist violence lasted intensively for a year or so and then to some extent upto 1926. In 1926 'exceptional laws' were passed to deal with political opponents which gave great powers to the state and made illegal action unnecessary. They

were something like the ordinances and the laws based on these ordinances which we have had in such abundance in India. Under these 'exceptional laws' people continue to be punished, sent to prison and deported in large numbers. According to official figures between November, 1926 and October, 1932, as many as 10,044 persons were brought before the special tribunals. Three penal islands have been set aside for the deportees—Pouza, Ventolene and Tremiti—and it is said that conditions are bad there. Meanwhile repression and arrests continue and, as late as March, 1933, a large number of arrests were made in Milan and the north. There was a general amnesty last year, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the march on Rome, and many ordinary prisoners and some political prisoners were released. But the important and long term political prisoners were not discharged.

It is clear by these continuing arrests that a secret and revolutionary opposition exists in the country in spite of all the repression that has taken place. It is difficult to say what the strength of it is. To all outward appearances Mussolini is firmly established on his dictator's throne. But financial burdens are increasing, and the economic condition of the country is again very bad. That, however, can be said now of almost every country.

DEMOCRACY AND DICTATORSHIPS

June 22, 1933

Benito Mussolini's example of setting himself up as a dictator in Italy seemed to be a catching one in Europe. "There is a vacant throne", had said, "in every country in Europe waiting for a capable man to fill it." Dictatorships arose in many countries and parliaments were either dissolved or forcibly made to fall in with the dictator's wishes. A notable instance was that of Spain.

Spain was not involved in the World War. She made money out of it by selling goods to the fighting nations. But she had her own troubles and she was industrially a very backward country. The days of her greatness in Europe, when the wealth of the America and the East poured in to her ports, were long past, and she hardly counted as an important power in Europe. There was a feeble parliament, called the Cortes, and the Roman Church was strong. As had happened in other industrially backward countries in Europe, syndicalism and anarchism spread rather than the solid Marxism and moderate socialism of Germany and England. In 1917, when the Bolsheviks in Russia were struggling for power, the workers and radicals of Spain tried to establish a democratic republic by having a general strike. This strike and the whole movement were crushed by the king's government and the army, and as a result the army became all powerful in the country. The king, relying on the army, also became a little more independent and autocratic.

Morocco had been more or less divided up into two spheres of influence by France and Spain. In 1921 an

able leader, Abdul Karim, rose among the Riffs of Morocco against Spanish rule. He showed great ability and gallantry and defeated Spanish troops repeatedly. This led to an internal crisis in Spain. Both the kings and the army leaders wanted to put an end to the constitution and the parliament and have a dictatorship. They agreed about this but they disagreed as to who was to be the dictator, the king wanting to be a dictator or absolute monarch himself, and the army people wanting a military dictatorship. In September, 1923, there was a military revolt and this decided the issue in favour of the army and General Primo de Rivera became the dictator. He suspended the Cortes (parliament) and ruled frankly on the basis of force, that is the army. The Morocco campaign against the Riffs, however, did not prosper and Abdul Karim continued to defy the Spanish aggressively. The Spanish government even offered him favourable terms but he refused them, holding out for complete independence. It is probable that the Spanish government would not have been able to subdue him single-handed. In 1925 the French, who had great interests in Morocco, decided to intervene and they brought their vast resources to bear against Abdul Karim. By the middle of 1926 he had been defeated and his long and gallant struggle ended by his surrender to the French.

In Spain, during all these years, Primo de Rivera's dictatorship continued with all the usual accompaniments of military force, censorship, repression, and sometimes martial law. This dictatorship, it must be remembered, was different from that of Mussolini as it was based solely on the army and not, as in Italy, on some classes of population. As soon as the army got tired of Primo de Rivera he had no other support left. Early in 1930 the king dismissed Primo. The same year there was a revolution that was suppressed, but the republican and revolutionary sentiment was too widespread to be kept down. In 1931 the republicans showed their great strength in the municipal elections

and, soon after, King Alfonso, holding that discretion was the better part of valour, abdicated and fled from the country. A provisional government was established and Spain, the old symbol of autocratic monarchy and Church rule in Europe, became the youngest of Europe's republics, outlawing the ex-King Alfonso and fighting the influence of the Church.

But I was telling you about dictators. Among the other countries besides Italy and Spain that gave up the democratic forms of government and established dictatorships were: Poland, Yugoslavia, Greece, Bulgaria, Portugal, Hungary, and, lately Austria. In Poland, Pilsudski, the old socialist of Tsarist days, was the dictator, owing to his control of the army, and he was in the habit of using the most amazingly offensive language to the legislators of the Polish parliament, and sometimes indeed they were arrested and bundled away. In Yugoslavia, the king, Alexander, is himself the dictator. It is stated that in some parts of the country conditions are worse and there is more oppression than there ever was even when the Turks governed them.

All the countries I have mentioned above are perhaps not under open dictatorships now. It is difficult to keep pace with their frequent changes. Sometimes their parliaments wake up for a while and are allowed to function; sometimes, as recently happened in Bulgaria, the government in power arrests the whole group of deputies it does not like, like the communists, and removes them forcibly from the parliament, leaving the others to carry on as best they can. Always they live either under dictatorship or on the verge of it, and such governments of individuals or small groups, resting on force, must find support in continuing repression, murders and imprisonments of opponents, a strict censorship and a wide-spread system of spies.

Dictatorships sprang up outside Europe also. I have already told you of Turkey and Kemal Pasha. In South America there were many dictators, but they are an old institution there, for the South American

republics have never taken kindly to the processes of democracy.

I have not included the Soviet Union in the above list of dictatorships because the dictatorship there, although as ruthless as any other, is of a different type. It is not the dictatorship of an individual or a small group but of a well organised political party basing itself especially on the workers. They call it the "dictatorship of the proletariat." Thus we have three kinds of dictatorships—the communist type, the fascist and the military. There is nothing peculiar about the military one; it has existed from the earliest days. The communist and fascist types are new in history and are the special products of our own times.

The first thing that strikes one is that all these dictatorships and their variations are the direct opposite of democracy and the parliamentary form of government. You will remember my telling you that the nineteenth century was the century of democracy, the century when the Rights of Man of the French Revolution governed advanced thought, and individual freedom was the aim. Out of this developed the parliamentary form of government, in varying degrees, in most countries of Europe. In the economic field this led to the theory of *laissez faire*. The twentieth century, or rather the post-war years, put an end to this great tradition of the nineteenth and fewer and fewer people do reverence now to the idea of formal democracy. And with this fall of democracy the so-called liberal groups everywhere have suffered a like fate and they have ceased to count as effective forces.

Both communism and fascism have opposed and criticised democracy, though each has done so on entirely different grounds. Even in countries which are neither communist nor fascist, democracy is far less in favour than it used to be. Parliament has ceased to be what it was and commands no great respect. Great powers are given to executive heads to do what they consider necessary without further reference to parliament.

Partly this is due to the critical times we live in when swift action is necessary and representative assemblies cannot always act swiftly. Germany has recently thrown overboard her parliament completely and is now exhibiting the worst type of fascist rule. The United States of America have always given a great deal of power to their president and this has been increased this year. England and France are about the only two countries at present where parliament still functions outwardly as in the old days; their fascist activities take place in their dependencies and colonies—in India we have British fascism at work, in Indo-China there is French fascism 'pacifying' the country. But even in London and Paris, parliaments are becoming hollow shells. Only last month a leading English liberal said that:

"Our representative Parliament is rapidly becoming merely the machinery of registration for the dictates of a governing caucus elected by an imperfect and badly working electoral machine."

Nineteenth century democracy and parliaments are thus losing ground everywhere. In some countries they have been openly and rudely discarded, in others they have lost real significance and tend to become a bit of "solemn and empty pageantry." A historian has compared this degeneration of parliament to the degeneration of kingship in the nineteenth century. Just as the king in England and elsewhere lost real power and became a constitutional monarch, more or less for show purposes, so also, according to this historian, parliaments are likely to become, and are becoming, powerless and dignified symbols, looking big and important, but meaning little.

Why has this happened? Why has democracy, which was for a century or more the ideal and inspiration of countless people, and which can count its martyrs by the thousand, why has it grown in disfavour now? Such changes do not happen without sufficient reason; they are not just due to the whims and fancies

of a fickle public. There must be something in modern conditions of life which does not fit in with the formal democracy of the nineteenth century. The subject is interesting and intricate. I cannot go into it here, but I shall put one or two considerations before you.

I have referred to democracy as 'formal' in the preceding paragraph. The communist say that it was not real democracy; it was only a democratic shell to hide the fact that one class ruled over the others. According to them, democracy covered the dictatorship of the capitalist class. It was plutocracy, government by the wealthy. The much paraded vote given to the masses gave them only the choice of saying, once in four or five years, whether a certain person X might rule over them and exploit them or another person Y should do so. In either event the masses were to be exploited by the ruling class. Real democracy can only come when this class rule and exploitation end and only one class exists. To bring about this socialist state, however, a period of the dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary so as to keep down all capitalistic and bourgeois elements in the population and prevent them from intriguing against the workers' state. This dictatorship is exercised by the Soviets in which all the workers and peasants and other 'active' elements are represented. Thus it becomes a dictatorship of the 90 per cent. or even 95 per cent. over the remaining five or ten per cent. That is the theory. In practice the Communist Party controls the Soviets and the ruling clique of Communists controls the Party. And the dictatorship is as strict, so far as censorship and freedom of thought or action are concerned, as any other. But as it is based on the good-will of the workers it must carry the workers with it. And, finally, there is no exploitation of the workers or any other class for the benefit of another. There is no exploiting class left. If there is any exploitation it is done by the state for the benefit of all. Russia, it is worth remembering, never had the democratic form of government. It jumped in 1917 from autocracy to communism.

The fascist attitude is entirely different. As I have told you in my last letter, it is not easy to find out what fascist principles are, as they do not seem to possess any fixed principles. But that they are opposed to democracy there is no doubt, and their opposition is not on the communist ground of democracy not being the real articles but a sham. Fascists object to the whole principle underlying the democratic idea, and they curse democracy with all the vigour at their command. Mussolini has called it a "putrefying corpse"! The idea of individual liberty is equally disliked by the Fascists, the state is everything, the individual does not count. (Communists also do not attach much value to individual liberties). What would poor Mazzini, the prophet of 19th century democratic liberalism, have said to his fellow-countryman Mussolini!

Not only communists and fascists but many others, who have thought over the troubles of the present age, have become dissatisfied with the old idea of giving a vote and calling it democracy. Democracy means equality and democracy can only flourish in an equal society. It is obvious enough that the giving of votes to everybody does not result in producing an equal society. In spite of adult suffrage and the like there is to-day tremendous inequality. Therefore, in order to give democracy a chance, an equal society must be created, and this reasoning leads them to various other ideals and methods. But all these people agree that present day parliaments are highly unsatisfactory.

Let us look a little more deeply into fascism and try to find out what it is. It glories in violence and hates pacifism. Mussolini, writing in the *Encyclopædia Italiana* says:

"Fascismo does not believe in the necessity or utility of perpetual peace. Therefore it repudiates pacifism, which conceals a refusal to struggle and an essential cowardice—in face of sacrifice. War, and war only, raises human energies to the maximum of tension and seals with its nobility the peoples who have the courage to accept it. All

other trials are substitutes; they do not place the individual before the choice of life and death."

Fascism is intensely nationalistic, while communism is international. Fascism actually opposes internationalism. It makes of the state a god on whose altar individual freedom and rights must be sacrificed; all other countries are alien and almost like enemies. Jews being considered as foreign elements are usually ill-treated. In spite of certain anti-capitalist slogans and a revolutionary technique, fascism is allied with property owning and reactionary elements.

These are some odd aspects of fascism. The philosophy underlying it, if it has any, is difficult to grasp. It began, as we have seen, with the simple desire for power. When success came, an attempt was made to build up a philosophy round it. Just to give you an idea of how very involved this is and to puzzle you, I shall give you an extract from the writings of an eminent Fascist philosopher. His name is Giovanni Gentile and he is considered the official philosopher of fascism; he has also been a fascist minister in the government. Gentile says that people should not seek self-realisation through their personality or individual selves as in democracy but, according to fascism, through the acts of the transcendental ego as the world's self-consciousness (whatever this may mean—it is wholly beyond me). Thus in this view there is no room for individual liberty and personality, for the true reality and freedom of the individual is that which he gains by losing himself in something else—the state.

"My personality is not suppressed, but uplifted, strengthened, enlarged by being merged and restored in that of the family, the state, the spirit."

Again Gentile says:

"Every force is moral force in so far as capable of influencing the will, whatever be the argument applied, the sermon or the cudgel."

So now we know what a lot of moral force the British

government in India uses up whenever it indulges in a *lathi* charge!

All these are subsequent attempts to justify or explain a thing that has happened. It is also said that fascism aims at a "corporative state", in which, I suppose everybody pulls together for the common good. But no such state has so far appeared in Italy or elsewhere. Capitalism functions in Italy more or less in the same way as in other capitalist countries.

As fascism has spread in other countries it has become clear that it is not a peculiar Italian phenomenon, but that it is something which appears when certain social and economic conditions prevail in a country. Whenever the workers become powerful and actually threaten the capitalistic state, the capitalist class naturally tries to save itself. Usually such a threat from the workers comes in times of violent economic crisis. If the owning and ruling class cannot put down the workers in the ordinary democratic way by using the police and army, then it adopts the fascist method. This consists in creating a popular mass movement, with some slogans which appeal to the crowd, meant for the protection of the owning capitalist class. The backbone for this movement comes from the lower middle class, most of them suffering from unemployment, and many of the politically backward and unorganised workers and peasants are also attracted to it by the slogans and hopes of bettering their position. Such a movement is financially helped by the big bourgeoisie who hope to profit by it, and although it makes violence a creed and a daily practice, the capitalist government of the country tolerates it to a large extent because it fights the common enemy—socialist labour. As a party, and much more so if it becomes the government in a country, it destroys the workers' organisations and terrorises all opponents.

Fascism thus appears when the class conflicts between an advancing socialism and an entrenched capitalism become bitter and critical. This social war

is due not to misunderstanding but to a better appreciation of the inherent conflicts and diversities of interests in our present day society. These conflicts cannot be resolved by smiling away at them. And the more people who suffer by the present system understand this diversity of interests, the more they resent being deprived of what they consider their share. The owning class has no intention of giving up what it has got and so the conflict becomes intense. So long as capitalism can use the machinery of democratic institutions to hold power and keep down labour, democracy is allowed to flourish. When this is not possible then capitalism discards democracy and adopts the open fascist method of violence and terror.

Fascism exists in varying degrees in all countries of Europe, except, I suppose, Russia. Its latest triumph has been won in Germany. Even in England fascist ideas are spreading among the ruling classes, and we see their application often enough in India. On the world stage to-day fascism, the last resort of capitalism, faces communism.

But fascism, apart from its other aspects, does not even offer to solve the economic troubles that afflict the world. By its intense nationalism it goes against the world tendency towards inter-dependence, and it aggravates the problems that the decline of capitalism has created. By its aggressive international attitude it adds to national friction which often leads to war.

REVOLUTION AND COUNTER-REVOLUTION IN CHINA

June 26, 1933

Let us now take leave of Europe with its discontents and visit another area of even greater trouble—the Far East, China and Japan. In my last letter on China I told you of the many difficulties of the young republic which had been grafted on to one of the world's most ancient and vital cultures. The country seemed to be splitting up, and unscrupulous war-lords, *tuchuns* and super-*tuchuns*, were coming into prominence, often encouraged and helped by the imperialist Powers, who were interested in keeping China weak and disunited. These *tuchuns* had no principles; each one of them stood for his own personal aggrandisement and they were frequently changing sides in the petty Civil Wars that were continually going on. Meanwhile they lived with their armies on the unhappy peasantry. I have also told you of the nationalist government organised in the South at Canton by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the great leader who had worked for China's freedom all his life.

The whole country was dominated by the economic interests of the foreign imperialist powers, who sat at the great port towns, like Shanghai and Hong-Kong, and controlled all the foreign trade of China. Dr. Sun had said quite truly that China was economically the colony of these Powers. It was bad enough to have a master, to have many masters was sometimes even worse. Dr. Sun tried to get foreign help to develop the country industrially and to put his house in order. In particular he looked to America and Britain, but neither of them, nor any other imperialist power, came to his help. They

were all interested in the exploitation of China and not in her well-being or strengthening. Dr. Sun then turned to Soviet Russia in 1924.

Communism had been growing secretly and rapidly among the students and intellectual classes in China. A Communist Party had been formed in 1920, and it worked as a secret society because it was not allowed to function openly by the various governments. Dr. Sun was far from being a communist; he was a mild socialist as his famous "Three Principles of the People" show. He was however impressed by the generous and straightforward behaviour of the Soviets towards China and other eastern countries, and he developed friendly relations with them. He engaged some Russian advisers, the best known of whom was a very able Bolshevik, Borodin. Borodin became a tower of strength to the Kuo-Min-Tang at Canton and he worked to build up a powerful national party organisation with mass support. He did not seek to work on communist lines entirely. He kept the national basis of the party but communists were now admitted to the Kuo-Min-Tang as members. There was thus a kind of informal alliance between the nationalist Kuo-Min-Tang and the Communist Party. Many of the conservative and richer members of the Kuo-Min-Tang, especially the landlords, did not like this association with the communists. On the other hand many of the communists did not like it either because it meant their toring down their programme and not doing many things they might otherwise have done. The alliance was not a very stable one and, as we shall see, it broke down at a critical moment and this brought disaster to China. It is always difficult to hold together in one group two or more classes whose interests clash. But while this alliance lasted it prospered exceedingly and the Kuo-Min-Tang and the Canton government grew in power. Tenants' organisations were encouraged and they spread rapidly, so also workers' trade unions. It was this mass support which gave the Canton Kuo-Min-Tang real power, and

it was this which frightened the landlord leaders and induced them to break up the party at a later stage.

Conditions in China bear many resemblances to those in India, although there are many radical differences also. China is essentially an agricultural country with vast numbers of farmers. Capitalist industry is confined chiefly to half a dozen cities and is under foreign control. The millions of farmers and tenants are crushed under a terrible burden of debt. Rents are very high and as in India, the agriculturists have long periods of enforced idleness when they have little work in the fields. Cottage industries are thus needed by them to fill in this time and add to their income. Indeed there are many such industries now. There are very few great estates. When such an estate is formed it is soon divided up among the heirs. About half the peasantry own their own farms, the other half work under landlords. China is thus a country of vast numbers of small farms. For hundreds of years Chinese farmers have had the reputation of being able to extract the utmost possible sustenance from the land. They were forced to do so because of the small parcels of land they possessed, and so they exercised an amazing ingenuity and worked tremendously hard. They had no labour-saving devices which modern agriculture possesses and this made them work harder than they need have done for the results obtained.

With all this ingenuity and hard work nearly half of them could not make both ends meet and half-starved through their short and stunted lives, as happens to the great numbers of peasants in India. They lived on the verge of destitution, and calamities came, famines and floods, and swept them away by the million. Dr. Sun's government, at Borodin's suggestion, passed decrees giving relief to the peasants and the workers. The land rent was reduced by 25 per cent., an eight hour working day and a minimum wage were fixed for the workers, and peasant unions were established. It was natural that these reforms should be welcomed by

the masses and fill them with enthusiasm. They flocked to the new unions and to the support of the Canton government.

So Canton consolidated itself and prepared for a tussle with the *tuchuns* of the north. A military academy was opened and an army built up. An interesting development not only in Canton but all over China, and to some extent all over the east, was the displacement of religious authority by secular authority. China, of course, has never been a religious country in the narrow sense of the word. It now became even more secular. Education, which used to be religious, was secularized. The most obvious examples of this process are afforded by the use to which many old temples are now put to. In Canton a famous old temple is now used as a police training institute! In another place temples have been converted into vegetable markets. There are societies for the suppression of religious superstition which carry on propaganda.

Dr. Sun Yat-sen died in March, 1925, but the Canton government went on adding to its strength, with Borodin as its adviser. Soon after, some incidents took place which filled the Chinese people with anger against foreign imperialists and especially the British. There were strikes in the cotton mills of Shanghai and a worker was killed in a demonstration in May, 1925. A great memorial service was organised for him and this was made the occasion of anti-imperialist demonstrations by students and workers. A British police officer, with Sikh policemen under him, ordered firing with this crowd—the order was “shoot to kill”—and several students were killed. Anger at the British blazed out all over China, and a subsequent incident made matters far worse. This took place in June, 1925, in the foreign area (known as the Shameen area) of Canton, where a Chinese crowd, chiefly of students, was fired on by machine guns and fifty-two persons were killed and many more wounded. The British were held to be mainly responsible for this “Shameen massacre” as it was

called. A political boycott of British goods was proclaimed at Canton, and Hong-Kong trade was held up for many months causing great losses to British firms and the British government. Hong-Kong, as you perhaps know, is a British possession in South China. It is quite near to Canton, and through it passes an enormous trade.

After the death of Dr. Sun there was a continuous tussle between the conservative right wing and the advanced left wing of the Canton government. Sometimes one and then the other was in power. About the middle of 1926 Chiang Kai-Shek, a right-winger, became commander-in-chief and he started pushing out the communists. But still to some extent the two groups worked together, although they distrusted each other. Then began the advance of the Canton army to the north to fight and expel the various *tuchuns* and establish one national government in the whole country. This northern advance was an extraordinary thing and soon it attracted the world's attention. There was little actual fighting and the army of the south marched on swiftly from victory to victory. The north was disunited but the real strength of the south came from its popularity with the peasants and workers. A little army of propagandists and agitators went ahead of the army, organising peasant and workers' unions and telling them of the benefits they would have under the Canton government. And so cities and villages welcomed the advancing armies and helped them in every way. The troops sent against the Canton army hardly fought and often went over, bag and baggage, to them. Before the year 1926 was over the nationalists had crossed half China and taken possession of the great city of Hankan on the Yangtse river. They shifted their capital from Canton to Hankan, renaming it Wuhan. The northern war-lords had been defeated and driven away, and the imperialist powers suddenly realised, much to their annoyance, that a new and aggressive nationalist China stood before them claiming

equality and refusing to be bullied.

Early in 1927 there was a conflict between the Chinese and the British when the nationalists tried to take possession of the British concession at Hankan. Ordinarily such an aggressive attitude on the part of the Chinese would have led to war and the British government would have crushed them and terrorised them into giving indemnities and more concessions. Such had been the invariable practice, as we have already seen, for nearly a century, since the Opium War of 1840. But times had changed and a different China faced them now, and so immediately, and for the first time in China, British policy underwent a change also and became conciliatory towards the new China. The Hankan concession affair was a minor matter and could be easily settled. But not very far, and on the line of the nationalist advance, was the great port of Shanghai, the biggest and the richest foreign concession area in China. Enormous foreign vested interests were interested in the fate of Shanghai. The city itself, or rather the concession area, was under foreign control and was practically independent of the Chinese government. These foreigners in Shanghai and their governments became very anxious when the nationalist armies approached them, and warships and troops were hurried to the port. The British government especially sent a large expeditionary force, consisting partly of Indian troops, to Shanghai early in January, 1927.

The nationalist government, now established at Hankan or Wuhan, was faced with a difficult problem—to advance or not to advance, to take Shanghai or not to do so. Their easy successes so far had emboldened them and filled them with enthusiasm, and Shanghai was a very tempting prize. On the other hand they had simply marched on and on over more than five hundred miles of territory, and had not consolidated their position there. To attack Shanghai might involve them in difficulties with foreign powers and this might endanger the gains they had already achieved. Borodin

advised caution and consolidation. He was of opinion that the nationalists should keep away from Shanghai and strengthen their position in the southern half of China which was already in their control, and prepare the ground in the north with propaganda. Very soon, within a year or so, he expected the whole of China to be ready to welcome a nationalist advance. That would be the time to take Shanghai, march to Peking, and face the foreign imperialist powers. Borodin, the revolutionary, gave this cautious advice, because he was experienced in judging the various factors in a situation. The right wing leaders of the Kuo-Min-Tang, however, and especially the commander-in-chief Chiang Kai-Shek, insisted on marching to Shanghai. The real reason for this desire to take Shanghai appeared later when the Kuo-Min-Tang split up into two. The growing power of the tenants' and workers' unions was not liked by these right wing leaders. Many of the generals were themselves landlords. They had, therefore, decided to crush these unions even at the cost of breaking up the party into two and weakening the nationalist cause. Shanghai was an important centre of the big Chinese bourgeoisie, and the right wing generals counted upon it to help them, with money and otherwise, in their fight against the more advanced elements in their party, and especially against the communists. In such a fight they knew they could also rely on the support of the foreign bankers and industrialists in Shanghai.

So they marched on Shanghai and on March 22, 1927, the Chinese part of the city fell to them, the foreign concession parts not being attacked. This fall of Shanghai also took place without much fighting. Opposing troops went over to the nationalists, and a general strike of the workers in the city in favour of the nationalists, completed the downfall of the existing government in Shanghai. Two days later the great city of Nanking was also occupied by the nationalist armies. And then came the split in the Kuo-Min-Tang between the left wing and the right wing, which put

an end to the nationalist triumph and brought disaster. The revolution had ended; counter-revolution now began.

Chiang Kai-Shek had marched on Shanghai against the wishes of many members of the Hankan government. Both parties intrigued against each other. The Hankan people tried to undermine Chiang's influence in the army and so to get rid of him; Chiang set up a rival government in Nanking. All this happened within a few days of the capture of Shanghai. Having rebelled against his own government at Hankan, Chiang now displayed his hand fully by making war on communists, left-wingers, and trade unionist workers. The very workers who had made it easy for him to take Shanghai and had welcomed him joyously there were now hunted out and crushed. Large numbers of people were shot down or beheaded, thousands were arrested and imprisoned. The freedom that the nationalists were supposed to have brought to Shanghai was soon converted into a bloody terror.

It was during these very April days of 1927 that, on an identical day, raids took place on the Soviet embassy in Peking and the Soviet consulate in Shanghai. It seemed obvious enough that Chiang Kai-Shek was acting in concert with the northern war-lord Chang Tso Lin, with whom he was supposed to be at war. In Peking, as in Shanghai, a 'clean-up' of communists and advanced workers was carried out. The imperialist powers of course welcomed this development. They approved of it because it broke up and weakened the ranks of the Chinese nationalists. It is highly likely that Chiang Kai-Shek was in touch with the representatives of the Powers in Shanghai. Later on there is no doubt that he sought to co-operate with them. You will remember that it was about this time, in May, 1927, that the British government carried off the Arcos raid on Soviet premises in London and then broke off relations with Russia.

And so, within a month or two, the picture had

changed completely in China. From being a united and a triumphant party representing the Chinese nation and, flushed with success, facing the foreign powers, the Kuo-Min-Tang had broken up into warring groups, and the workers and peasants, who had been its life and strength, were now being persecuted and hunted down. The foreign interests in Shanghai breathed happily again and graciously helped one group against another, especially in the pleasant and profitable pastime of baiting and harassing the workers. These workers in the Shanghai factories (and indeed in all China) were terribly exploited by the owners and their standards and living conditions were miserable. Trade unionism gave them strength and had already forced the hands of the owners in giving higher wages. Trade unions therefore were not approved of by the factory owners—European, Japanese or Chinese.

Borodin was strongly criticised in Moscow at the turn events had taken in China and in July, 1927, he left for Russia. With his departure the left wing of the Kuo-Min-Tang at Hankan went to pieces. The Nanking government now controlled the Kuo-Min-Tang completely and the war against communists especially and also all left-wingers and workers' leaders continued. Among those who left China, or were driven out, at this stage was Madame Sun, the revered widow of the great leader, Sun Yat-sen. She declared in sorrow that her husband's great work for China's freedom had been betrayed by the militarists and others. And yet these militarists continued to swear by Dr. Sun's principles!

Again China became a maze of war-lords and generals fighting each other. Canton broke off from the Nanking government and established a government of its own in the south. In 1928 Peking fell into the hands of the Nanking government. Its name was changed to Peiping which means 'Northern Peace'. Peking had meant 'Northern Capital', but it was no longer the capital.

In spite of the fall of Peking or Peiping, as we must call it now, Civil War continued in various parts of the country. Canton formed a separate government, but even in the north, various war-lords did much as they pleased and carried on personal quarrels and sometimes came to terms with each other for a while. In theory the so-called 'National' government at Nanking ruled China, except for Canton. There were however many areas which were beyond its control, notably a big area in the interior where a communist government was set up. The Nanking government relied chiefly on the Shanghai bankers for financial support. The large armies of various generals became a terrible burden on the peasantry. Vast numbers of ex-soldiers also roamed about the countryside in search of employment and, finding none, often took to banditry.

Relations between the Nanking government and Soviet Russia were broken off in December, 1927, and, under the patronage of the imperialist powers, Nanking adopted an aggressive anti-Soviet policy. This would have led to war in 1927 but for the persistent refusal of Russia to go to war. In 1929 the Chinese government again became aggressive, this time in Manchuria. The Soviet consulate was raided and Russian officials of the Chinese Eastern Railway were dismissed. This railway was largely Russian property and the Soviet government immediately took action against the Chinese. For a few months a kind of war existed and then the Chinese government agreed to the Soviet demand to restore the old arrangement.

Manchuria and the railway running through it have led to many international complications as many interests clash there, especially Chinese, Japanese and Russian. During the last two years Japan has tried to, and practically succeeded in getting, full control over it, in spite of world disapproval. I shall tell you of this in my next letter.

I have referred above to a communist government being set up in some parts of China. Such a government

exists in China to-day though it is not quite clear how strong it is and over what area it exercises jurisdiction. It appears that the first communist government to be established was in November, 1927, in the district of Haifeng in the province of Kwantung in the south. This was the "Haifeng Soviet Republic" which developed out of various peasants' unions. The Soviet area grew in the interior of China till by the middle of 1932 about a sixth of the total area of China proper, that is, an area of 250,000 square miles with a population of fifty millions—was included in it. This area is under the absolute control of the Communist Party and, it is said, that discipline is well maintained there. They have built up a Red Army of 400,000 men, and this army has got auxiliary units of boys and girls. Both the Nanking and Canton governments have tried their utmost to crush these Chinese Soviets but have so far not succeeded. The reason for this partly is that the communist area lies in the interior without good communications and is difficult of approach. Another reason is that the Kuo-Min-Tang is rapidly losing all its influence, while the Soviets are popular and are gaining in strength. Communism is supposed to flourish in highly industrialised countries, while these Chinese Soviet Republics are very backward and are almost cut off from the world. It is likely, however, that they will play an important part in the future of China. Already the area they control is enormous—it is about equal to the joint area of the United Provinces, Delhi, the Punjab and the Frontier Province, all the way from Benares to Peshawar. The population exceeds that of the United Provinces.

Eighteen months to my arrest to-day! A year and a half!

JAPAN DEFIES THE WORLD

June 29, 1933

We have followed the dismal story of the disintegration of China, of the revolution that seemed to have triumphed and then, suddenly, collapsed and was swallowed up by a fierce counter-revolution. The tale is not ended yet, there is more to come; and even as I write the process of cutting up China goes on. The revolution failed because the conflicts of conscious class interests were greater than the binding force of nationalism. The rich landed and other interests preferred to break the nationalist movement rather than risk the dominance of the peasant and worker masses. We see the same kind of thing, in a different form, happening in India to-day.

Apart from her internal troubles, China had now to face a determined attack from a foreign enemy. This was Japan, bent on profiting by the weakness of China and the pre-occupation of other powers.

Japan is an extraordinary example of a mixture of modern industrialism and a medieval feudalism, of parliamentarism and autocracy and military control. The ruling landowning and military classes have deliberately tried to build up a state on the lines of a clan with themselves as the chiefs and the emperor as the supreme head. Religion, education, everything has been made to help in this process. Religion is an officially controlled affair, the temples and shrines being directly under official control, and the priests holding official posts. Thus a huge propaganda machine, working through the temples and schools, is constantly teaching the people not only patriotism to the country

but obedience to the will of the emperor who is to be considered semi-divine. The old Japanese term for something corresponding to the old chivalry was '*Bushido*', a kind of clan loyalty. This idea has been extended to cover the whole state, and with it is connected the Emperor at the top. The emperor is really a symbol in whose name the ruling big landlord and military class exercises power. Industrialisation has developed a bourgeoisie in Japan but the big industrial magnates happen to come from the old landowning families, and so there has so far been no shift of power to the bourgeoisie as such. In effect, there is so much monopoly in Japan that a few powerful families control the industry as well as the politics of Japan.

Buddhism has long been a popular faith in Japan, but Shinto is more of a national religion with its stress on ancestor worship. This worship includes the past emperors and heroes of the nation, and especially those who have died in war. In this way it becomes a powerful and effective method for spreading a love of country and the idea of obedience to the reigning emperor. The Japanese people are famous for their amazing patriotism and their capacity for sacrifice for their country. It is not so well-known that this patriotism is of a very aggressive kind and dreams of world empire. About 1915 a new sect was started in Japan. It was called the 'Omoto-Kyo' sect and it spread very rapidly all over the country. The principal doctrine of this sect was that Japan should become the ruler of the whole world, the emperor being the supreme head. On behalf of the sect it was stated:

"We are only aiming at making the Emperor of Japan ruler and governor of the whole world, as he is the only ruler in the world who retains the spiritual mission inherited from the remotest ancestor in the divine world."

During the World War, as we have seen, Japan tried to bully China by her twenty-one demands. She did not get all she wanted, because of the outcry in America and Europe, but she got a great deal. After

the war Japan saw in the collapse of the Tsarist Empire an ideal opportunity for spreading out in Asia. Her armies entered Siberia and her agents came right up to Samarqand and Bokhara in Central Asia. That adventure failed because of the recovery of Soviet Russia and to some extent the opposition and distrust of America. For it must always be remembered that there is little love lost between Japan and the United States of America. They dislike each other greatly and glare at each other across the Pacific Ocean. The Washington Conference of 1922 was a blow to Japanese ambitions and a victory for American diplomacy. At this conference nine powers, including Japan, pledged themselves to respect the integrity of China, which meant that Japan must give up all hopes of spreading out in China. At this Conference also the Anglo-Japanese alliance came to an end and Japan stood isolated in the Far East. The British government started building a mighty naval base at Singapore and this was obviously a threat to Japan. In 1924 the United States of America passed an anti-Japanese immigration bill, as they wanted to keep out Japanese workers from the States. This racial discrimination was greatly resented in Japan, and to some extent all over the east. But Japan could do nothing against America. Feeling isolated and surrounded by a hostile ring, Japan turned to Russia and in January, 1925, signed a treaty with her.

I must tell you of a great disaster that befell Japan during this period and which weakened her very much. This was a terrible earthquake which came on September 1, 1923, and was followed by a tidal wave and a fire in the great capital city of Tokyo. This huge city was destroyed and so also the port of Yokohama. Over a hundred thousand people died and enormous damage was done. The Japanese people met the disaster with courage and resolution and built a new city of Tokyo on the ruins of the old.

Japan had come to terms with Russia because of her difficulties, but this did not mean approval of

communism. Communism meant the end of emperor-worship, and feudalism, and the exploitation of the masses by the ruling class, and indeed almost everything that the existing order stood for. This communism was growing in Japan because of the increasing misery of the people who were being exploited more and more by powerful industrial interests. The population was growing rapidly. It could not emigrate to America or Canada or even the barren wastes of Australia; the doors were closed. China was near but China was over full of people. There was some emigration to Korea and Manchuria. Besides her own especial troubles, Japan had to face the common troubles of industrialism and trade depression which all the world was experiencing. As the internal situation grew more serious, severe repression of communist and all radical ideas began. In 1925 a "Peace Preservation Law" was passed and, as the wording is interesting, I shall give you the first article of this law. It runs thus:

"That those who have organised an association or fraternity with the object of altering the national constitution, or of repudiating the private property system, or those who have joined such an organisation with full knowledge of its object, are to be punished with penalty, ranging from death to servitude of over five years".

The extreme severity of this law, which bars not only communism but all forms of socialistic or radical or constitutional reform, is a measure of the fright of the Japanese government at the rise of communism.

But communism is the outcome of wide-spread misery due to social conditions, and unless these conditions are improved, mere repression can be no remedy. There is terrible misery in Japan at present. The peasantry, as in China and India, are crushed under a tremendous burden of debt. Taxation especially because of heavy military expenditure and war needs, is very heavy. Reports come of starving peasants trying to live on grass and roots, and of selling even their children. The middle classes are also in a bad way owing to

unemployment and suicides have increased.

The campaign against communism began on a big scale early in 1928 when over a thousand arrests were made in the course of one night, and yet newspapers were not allowed to publish this fact for over a month. Police raids and mass arrests have followed each other ever since then and still continue. The biggest raid took place last year, in October, 1932, when 2250 persons were arrested. Most of these people are not labourers but are students and teachers. There are among them hundreds of graduates and women. It is curious to notice that many rich young people have been attracted to communism in Japan. Latterly there has also been a bank robbery which is said to be the work of communists, working after the fashion of the old Russian and Polish 'ex-proprietors'. The police are so busy fighting communism and radicalism that they have little time for ordinary criminals. Advanced thinkers, there as in India and elsewhere, are considered more dangerous than criminals. As in the Meerut trial in India, some of the Japanese communist trials have gone on for years.

I have told you all this about conditions in Japan so that you may have some idea of the background of the Manchurian adventure of Japan, about which I propose to tell you something now.

I have told you in previous letters of Japan's persistent attempts to get a footing on the Asiatic mainland, first in Korea and then in Manchuria. The war with China of 1894 and the Russian war of ten years later were both waged with this object in view. Success came to Japan and step by step she went ahead. { Korea was absorbed and became just a part of the Japanese empire. In Manchuria, which is a general name for China's three eastern provinces, the Russian lease and concessions round about Port Arthur were transferred to Japan. Part of the railway built by Russia across Manchuria, the Chinese Eastern Railway, also came under Japanese control, and was named the South

Manchuria Railway. In spite of all these changes Manchuria as a whole still continued to be under the Chinese government, and because of the railway Chinese immigrants poured in. Indeed this immigration to the three north-eastern provinces is supposed to be one of the greatest migrations in world history. Within seven years, from 1923 to 1929, over two and a half million Chinese went across. The population of Manchuria is about thirty millions now and of these 95 per cent. are Chinese. The three provinces are thus thoroughly Chinese. The remaining five per cent. are Russians, Mongol nomads, Koreans and Japanese. The old Manchus have become absorbed in the Chinese, and have even forgotten their language.

You will remember my telling you of the Nine-Power Treaty signed at the Washington Conference of 1922. This was especially made, at the suggestion of the western powers, to check Japanese designs in China. Explicitly and unambiguously, all the nine powers (of which Japan was one) agreed "to respect the sovereignty, the independence and the territorial and administrative integrity of China."

For some years Japan held her hand. Behind the scenes, however, she helped, with money and otherwise, some of the Chinese war-lords or *tuchuns* to carry on the Civil War and thus weaken China. In particular, she helped Chang Tso Lin who dominated Manchuria and even Peking till the victory of the southern nationalists. In 1931 the Japanese government adopted an openly aggressive attitude in Manchuria. This may have been due to their intense economic crisis which forced them to do something abroad to divert attention as well as relieve the tension at home, or to the dominance of the military party in the government, or to the feeling that all the other powers were busy with their own troubles and the trade depression and were not likely to interfere. Probably all these reasons worked together to induce the Japanese government to take a step which was a very serious one. For this step was a distinct

breach of the Nine-Power Treaty of 1922. It was also a breach of the League of Nations Covenant for both China and Japan were members of the League and as such could not attack each other without reference to the League. And, lastly, it was a clear breach of the Paris (or Kellogg) Pact of 1928 for the outlawry of war. By carrying on warlike operations against China, the Japanese government deliberately broke these treaties and pledges and defied the world.

Of course they did not say so. They put up some feeble, and obviously untrue, excuse of bandits in Manchuria and some petty incidents which compelled them to send their troops to maintain order and protect their interests. There was no open declaration of war but nevertheless there was a Japanese invasion of Manchuria. The Chinese people were very angry at this. The Chinese government protested and appealed to the League of Nations and the other powers, but no one paid any attention to them. Each country was full of its own troubles and unwilling to add to them by opposing Japan. It is also probable that some powers, and notably England, had a secret arrangement with Japan. Chinese irregular troops gave a lot of trouble to the Japanese in Manchuria. And yet there was supposed to be no war between the two countries! More troublesome to Japan was a great movement in China for the boycott of Japanese goods.

In January, 1932, a Japanese army suddenly descended on Chinese soil near Shanghai, and perpetrated one of the most ghastly massacres of modern times. They avoided the foreign concession areas, so as not to irritate the western powers, and attacked densely populated Chinese quarters. A huge area near Shanghai (I think its name was Chapei) was bombed and shelled and utterly destroyed, thousands being killed and vast numbers rendered homeless. Remember that this was not a fight against an army. It was the bombing of innocent civilians. The Japanese admiral who was in charge of this gallant operation, when asked about it, stated

that Japan had mercifully decided that there should be "only two more days of indiscriminate bombing of civilians!" Even the pro-Japanese correspondent of the London 'Times' in Shanghai was shocked by this 'wholesale massacre', as he called it, of the Chinese by the Japanese. What the Chinese people felt about it may well be imagined. A wave of horror and anger passed through China, and the various war-lords and governments in the country forgot, or seemed to forget, their mutual rivalries before this barbarous foreign invasion. There was talk of a united front against Japan, and even the communist government of the Chinese interior offered its services to the Nanking government. And yet, strange to say, Nanking, or its leader Chiang Kai-Shek, made no move to defend Shanghai from the advancing Japanese troops. All that Nanking did was to protest to the League. It did not even try to build up a united resistance against the Japanese. It almost appears that it had no desire to resist in spite of its tall talk and the burning indignation of the country.

And then there appeared at Shanghai an odd army from the south, the Nineteenth Route Army it was called. It consisted of Cantonese people but it was not under the orders of either the Nanking or the Canton government. It was a ragged army with little equipment, no big guns, poor uniforms, and not enough clothing to protect it from the bitter cold of a Chinese winter. There were many boys of fourteen and sixteen serving in it; some were only twelve years old. This ragged army decided to fight and hold the Japanese in defiance of Chiang Kai-Shek's orders. For two weeks in January and February, 1932, they fought without any help from the Nanking government, and they fought with such remarkable heroism that the far stronger and better-equipped Japanese were, much to their surprise, held up. Not only the Japanese but everybody was surprised, the foreign powers and the Chinese people themselves. After two weeks' unaided fighting, when everybody was full of praises of this army, Chiang Kai-

Shek sent some of his troops to help in the defence.

The 19th Route Army made history and became famous the world over. Their defence upset Japanese plans and as the western powers were also anxious about their interests in Shanghai, the Japanese troops were gradually withdrawn from the Shanghai area and shipped away. It is worth noting that these western powers were far more concerned with their financial or other interests than with odd massacres like the Chapei one, in which thousands of Chinese had been killed, or with the breach of solemn treaties and international covenants. The League of Nations was repeatedly moved in the matter but always it found some excuse for postponing it. The fact that an actual war was going on and thousands had been and were being killed was not a matter for urgency for the League. It was said that there was no real war because it had not been officially declared to be a war! The reputation and prestige of the League suffered greatly by this weakness and almost deliberate connivance at wrong doing. The responsibility for this of course lay with some of the great powers, and England, especially adopted a pro-Japanese attitude in the League. Ultimately the League appointed an international commission of enquiry into the Manchurian affair under the chairmanship of Lord Lytton. This was readily agreed to by the powers as it meant postponing any decision for many months! Manchuria was far off and it would take a long time for the commission to go there and report, and perhaps the matter might blow over by then.

The Japanese withdrew from Shanghai but they paid more attention now to Manchuria. They set up a puppet government there and proclaimed that Manchuria had exercised its right of self-determination! This new puppet state was named Manchukuo and a seedy looking youth, a descendant of the old Manchu rulers of China, was made the monarch of the new domain. Of course the whole thing was for show purposes only and Japan was the real ruler. Everybody

knew that if the Japanese army was removed the state of Manchukuo would topple over in a day.

The Japanese had great trouble in Manchuria for volunteer Chinese bands were continually fighting them. These bands are called by the Japanese 'bandits'. Manchukuo armies, consisting of the local Chinese, were trained and equipped by the Japanese. When they were sent against the 'bandits', they walked over and joined the 'bandits' with all their up-to-date equipment! Manchuria is in a bad way because of this incessant warfare. Crops have not been sown and the soya bean trade is dying out.

After many months of enquiry the Lytton Commission presented its report to the League of Nations. It was a careful, moderate and judicially worded document but it was dead against Japan. This upset the British government very much as they were bent on protecting Japan. The consideration of the matter was put off for several months again. At last the question had to be faced by the League. The American attitude had been very different from that of England; it was much more against Japan. America had declared that she would not recognise any change brought about forcibly by Japan in Manchuria or elsewhere. In spite of this strong American attitude, England, and to some extent France, Italy and Germany, supported Japan. It has been stated that Britain has a secret understanding with Japan on this and other matters.

While the League was doing its best to avoid a decision, Japan took a new step. On New Year's Day this year (1933) a Japanese army suddenly appeared in China proper and attacked the town of Shanhaikwan, which stands on the China side of the Great Wall. There was shelling from big guns and destroyers, and bombing from aeroplanes; it was a thoroughly up-to-date attack, and Shanhaikwan was reduced to a "smoking ruin", and a large number of its civilian inhabitants lay dead and dying. And then the Japanese army marched on into the Chinese province of Jehol and

approached Peiping. The excuse was that the 'bandits' used to make Jehol their headquarters for attacking Manchukuo, and any way Jehol was part of Manchukuo!

This fresh aggression and New Year Day massacre woke up the League and, largely because of the insistence of the smaller powers, the League passed a resolution adopting the Lytton report and condemning Japan. The Japanese government did not care in the least (for did it not know that some great powers, including England, were backing it secretly?) and marched out of the League. Having resigned from the League Japan quietly went on advancing on Peiping. It met with little or no resistance, and it almost appears that the whole thing was a put up job. About a month ago the Japanese army was almost on the gates of Peiping, and then it was suddenly announced that there had been an armistice between China and Japan on May 31, 1933. The whole affair has been shrouded in mystery and nothing definite is known so far. But it seems that the Japanese government has triumphed and the Nanking government, either through weakness or intentionally, has accepted this triumph. It is not surprising that the Nanking government and the present Kuo-Min-Tang are becoming very unpopular in China, after the pitiful exhibition which they have given against Japanese aggression.

I have said a lot about this Manchurian affair. It is important because it affects the future of China. But it is more important still because it shows up the League of Nations and its utter ineffectiveness and futility in the face of proved international wrong doing. It also shows up the duplicity of the big European powers and their intrigues. In this particular matter America (which is not a member of the League) tried to take up a strong attitude against Japan and almost drifted into war with her. But then England's and other powers' secret support of Japan nullified America's attitude and, fearing isolation against Japan, America became more cautious. The League has now piously

condemned Japan and it was expected that it would follow this up by some joint action. But nothing has been done and nothing is likely to be done. The puppet state of Manchukuo is not to be recognised by the League members but this non-recognition is becoming little more than a farce.

In spite of the League condemnation of Japan, British ministers and ambassadors go out of their way to justify Japanese action. This is a strange contrast to England's behaviour towards Russia. About two months ago some English engineers were tried in Russia for espionage. Some were acquitted and two were sentenced to light terms of imprisonment. There was a great outcry at this and the British government immediately put an embargo on the entry of Russian goods into Britain. Russia responded keeping out British goods.

{ So China has, for the present at least, lost Manchuria. Mongolia is a Soviet country allied to the Russian Soviet Union. Tibet is independent now. In China proper there are at least three governments: the principal government with its capital at Nanking, the Canton government in the south, and the communist government in the interior. Then there are some odd generals and *tuchuns* who do much as they like and ally themselves to this party or the other by turns. And in the north, from the Great Wall almost to Peiping, sits Japan always thinking of fresh aggression. The great treaty ports are practically under foreign control, with large foreign concessions, and these ports control the trade of huge areas in the interior. Economically the country, except for the Soviet and communist part of it, is still more under foreign influence and dominance. }

{ Another huge province seems to be falling away from China. This is Sinkiang or Chinese Turkestan, which lies between Tibet and Siberia. To Yarkand and Kashgar in this province go caravans regularly from Srinagar in Kashmir *via* Leh in Ladakh. For the last

two or three months news has come of a Turkish revolt in Sinkiang and Yarkand and Kashgar have fallen. The British throw out hints that the Soviets are behind this revolt. On the other hand the Soviet news agencies have openly stated that the revolt has been encouraged by certain British imperialists with the object of making Sinkiang a buffer state between China and Russia, like Manchukuo. Even the name of the British army officer who has organised this in Sinkiang is mentioned. It is difficult to say what the true facts are, but it may be taken as certain that both the British and Soviet governments are carrying on intrigues in Sinkiang. Probably the revolt is a nationalist one, for the Muslim Turks there are more influenced by nationalist ideas than by religious motives. It appears that a republic has been proclaimed in Chinese Turkestan.

With this letter I have brought the story of China and Japan up-to-date and I take leave of the Far East. But before I finish I want to remind you of little (and yet it is not so little after all) Korea or Chosen. The Japanese are masters of the country, but it still works and dreams of independence, and there is even (outside Korea!) a "Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea"!

THE UNION OF SOCIALIST SOVIET REPUBLICS

July 7, 1933

Let us now go back to Russia, the land of the Soviets, and take up the thread of her story from where we had left off. We had reached January, 1924, when Lenin, the leader and inspirer of the revolution, died. In the many subsequent letters that I have written to you since about other countries, Russia has frequently found mention. In considering European problems, or the Indian frontier, or the middle eastern countries, Turkey and Persia, or the Far East, China and Japan, Russia has cropped up again and again. The fact must be becoming evident to you that it is very difficult, and indeed impossible, to separate the politics and economics of one nation from those of others. The inter-relations and inter-dependence of nations has grown tremendously in recent years, and the world is becoming, in many ways, a single unit. Our schools and colleges go on pegging away. After the old fashion, all national histories deal with particular countries only. But history has become international, a world history, and can only be understood even as regards one country if we keep looking at the world as a whole.

The enormous area covered by the Soviet Union in Europe and Asia stands apart from the capitalist world, and yet everywhere it comes into contact, and often into conflict, with this other world. I have told you in previous letters of the Soviet's generous eastern policy, of the help given to Turkey, Persia and Afghanistan, and of its intimate relations with China, followed by a sudden break. I have also told you of the Arcos raid

in England, and of the *Zinoviev letter* which turned out to be a forgery but which none the less influenced a British general election. Now I want to take you to the centre of Soviet land to watch the development of the strange and fascinating social experiment that was taking place there.

The first four years after the Revolution, from 1917 to 1921, had been a period of fighting to preserve the Revolution from a host of enemies. It was a thrilling and dramatic period of war and revolt and Civil War and starvation and death, brightened up by the crusading zeal of the masses and the heroism shown in defence of an ideal. The immediate reward was nothing, but great hopes and promises filled the people and made them bear their terrible sufferings and forgot even, for a while, their empty stomachs. This was the period of 'military communism'.

Then came a slight relaxation when Lenin introduced the New Economic Policy or NEP in 1921. It was a going back from communism, a compromise with bourgeois elements in the country. This did not mean that the Bolshevik leaders had changed their objective. All it meant was that they had taken a step back to rest and recuperate in order to be able to take several steps forward again later. So the Soviets settled down and faced the mighty problem of building up a nation that had been largely destroyed and ruined. In order to build and do constructive work they wanted machinery and material, such as railway engines and carriages and motor trucks and tractors and factory equipments. They had to buy these in foreign countries and they had little money for them. They tried therefore to get credits in these foreign countries so that they might be able to pay for the goods they bought in convenient instalments. Credits could only be obtained when the countries were on speaking terms with each other, not if they did not recognize each other officially. Soviet Russia was therefore very keen on getting recognition from the big powers and having diplomatic and trade

relations with them. But these big imperialist powers hated the Bolsheviks and all their works; to them communism was an abomination that must be put down. They had indeed tried their best to put it down during the wars of intervention and they had failed. They would have preferred to have no dealings with the Soviets. But it is difficult to ignore a government which happens to control one-sixth of the whole surface of the earth. It is still more difficult to ignore a good customer who is prepared to lay a great deal of expensive machinery. Trade between an agricultural country like Russia and industrial countries like Germany, England and America was beneficial to both sides, for Russia wanted machinery and could supply cheap food and raw material.

The pull of the pocket was at last greater than the hatred of communism, and nearly all countries recognised the Soviet government and many of them made trade treaties with it. The only power that has consistently refused to recognise the Soviets is America. Even now they have no diplomatic relations with each other although it is expected that recognition will come soon. There has however been trade between Russia and America.

In this way the Soviets established relations with most of the capitalist and imperialist powers, and to some extent they profited by the rivalries of these powers, as they did when defeated Germany turned to them in 1922 and the Rapallo Treaty was signed. But the compromise was a very unstable one and there was a fundamental incompatibility between the two systems—capitalist and communist. The Bolsheviks were always encouraging the oppressed and exploited people, both the subject peoples in colonial countries and the workers in factories, to rise against their exploiters. They did not do so officially but through the Comintern or Communist International. The imperialist powers, on the other hand, and especially England, were continually intriguing against the very existence of the Soviets.

So there was bound to be trouble and there was frequent trouble resulting in a break of diplomatic relations and in war scares. You will remember my telling you of the breach with England that followed the Arcos raid in 1927. Anglo-Russian Friction has indeed been continuous during the last fifteen and a half years since the Soviets came into existence. This is easy to understand, as England is the leading imperialist power and Soviet Russia represents an idea which strikes at the root of all imperialism. But there seems to be something even more than that between these hostile countries, something of the hereditary and traditional enmity which existed for generations between Tsarist Russia and England.

The fear to-day in England and other capitalist countries is not so much of Soviet armies, but of something more intangible and yet more powerful and dangerous, of Soviet ideas and communist propaganda. To counter this a continuous and largely untrue propaganda is kept up against Russia and the most amazing stories about Soviet villainy are circulated. British statesmen use language against the Soviet leaders, which they have never used except against their enemies in wartime. Lord Birkenhead referred to the Soviet statesmen as "a junta of assassins" and "a junta of swollen frogs" at a time when the two countries were supposed to be not only at peace but had diplomatic relations with each other. Under these conditions it is obvious that there can be no really friendly relations between the Soviets and the imperialist powers. The differences between them are fundamental. The victors and vanquished of the World War may come together, but not the communist and capitalist. Peace between the latter two can only be temporary; it is but a truce.

One of the recurring grounds of dispute between Soviet Russia and the capitalist powers is the repudiation of foreign debts by the former. This is not a live issue now as, in these hard times, almost every country is defaulting in the payment of debt. But still the subject

crops up from time to time. Soon after the Bolsheviks came to power they repudiated the former Tsarist debts to other countries. This policy had been declared as early as the unsuccessful revolution of 1905. Consistently, the Soviets also gave up such claims as they had on the eastern countries, China, etc. Further, they did not claim any share in Reparations. In 1922 the Allied governments presented a memorandum to the Soviets on the question of these debts. To this the Soviets replied reminding the governments how many of the capitalist states had in the past repudiated debts and obligations, and confiscated the property of foreigners. "Governments and systems that spring from revolutions are not bound to respect the obligations of fallen governments." The Soviet government especially reminded the Allies of what one of them, France, had done during her great revolution.

"The French Convention, of which France declares herself to be the legitimate successor, proclaimed on the 22nd December, 1792, that 'the sovereignty of people is not bound by the treaties of tyrants. In accordance with this declaration, revolutionary France not only tore up the political treaties of former régimes with foreign countries, but also repudiated her national debt.'"

In spite of this justification of repudiation, the Soviet government was so keen to come to terms with the other powers that it was perfectly prepared to discuss the question of debt with them. But it took up the position that such discussion could only take place after the foreign government had given unconditional recognition to the Soviets. As a matter of fact the Soviet gave many assurances about payment of obligations to England, France and America, but there was no great eagerness on the part of the capitalist powers to come to terms with Russia.

As against the British claim the Soviet had made an interesting counter-claim. The total British claim against Russia for government and war debts and railway bonds and commercial investments amounted to

about £840,000,000. The Bolsheviks counter-claimed from Britain for her share of the damage done during the Russian Civil War, as Britain and British forces had supported the enemies of the Soviets. The total damage was estimated at £4,067,226,040 and of this Britain's share was said to be approximately £2,000,000,000. So that the counter-claim was nearly two and a half times greater than the claim.

In making this counter-claim the Bolsheviks were not on very weak ground. They gave the famous instance of the *Alabama* cruiser. This cruiser was built in England for the Southern States during the American Civil War of the sixties. The cruiser left Liverpool after the Civil War had begun and it did a great deal of damage to the shipping and trade of the Northern States. England and America were on the verge of war. The United States government claimed that England had no business to hand over the cruiser to the Southern States during wartime and they claimed compensation for all the damage it was caused. The matter was referred to arbitration and ultimately England had to pay £3,229,166 to the United States as damages.

England's part in the Russian Civil War was far more important and effective than this supply of a cruiser for which she had had to pay such heavy damages. During the wars of foreign intervention in Russia, it has been officially stated by the Soviet that 1,350,000 lives were lost.

This question of Russia's old debts has not yet been finally decided and it is losing all importance by sheer lapse of time. Meanwhile, we see great capitalist and imperialist countries like England, France, Germany and Italy doing almost the very thing which had shocked them so much in Russia's case. It is true they do not repudiate their debts or challenge the basis of the capitalist system. They merely default and do not pay.

Soviet policy with other nations was one of peace at almost any cost for they wanted time to recuperate, and the great task of building up a huge country on

socialistic lines absorbed their attention. There seemed to be no near prospect of social revolution in other countries and so the idea of a 'world revolution' faded off for the time being. With eastern countries, Russia developed a policy of friendship and co-operation although they were governed under the capitalist system. I have told you of the network of treaties between Russia and Turkey and Persia and Afghanistan. A common fear and dislike of the great imperialist powers was the link that joined them.

The New Economic Policy which Lenin introduced in 1921 was meant to win over the middle peasantry to socialisation. The rich peasants or *kulaks*, as they are called—the word *Kulak* means a fist—were not encouraged as they were capitalists on a small scale and resisted the process of socialisation. Lenin also started a huge scheme for the electrification of rural areas and mighty electric plants were put up. This was meant to help the peasants in many ways and to prepare the way for the industrialisation of the country. Above all it was meant to produce an industrial mentality among the peasantry, and so to bring them nearer to the town workers or proletariat. The peasants, whose villages were lighted up by electricity and much of whose farm work was done by electric power, began to get out of the old ruts and superstitions and to think on new lines. There is always a conflict between the interests of the city and the village, the town-dweller and the peasant. The worker in the city wants cheap food and raw material from the countryside and high prices for the factory goods he makes; the peasant, on the other hand, wants cheap tools and other factory goods from the city and high prices for the food and raw materials he produces. This conflict was becoming acute in Russia as a result of the four years of militant communism. It was largely because of this and in order to relieve the tension that the NEP was introduced and the peasants were given facilities for private trading.

Lenin was so keen on his scheme for electrification

that he used a formula that became famous. He said that "electricity plus Soviets equals socialism." Even after Lenin's death this electrification continued at a tremendous pace. Another way of influencing the peasantry and improving agricultural methods was to introduce large numbers of tractors for ploughing and other purposes. The Ford Company of America supplied them. The Soviets also entered into a very big contract with Ford for the construction of a huge motor plant in Russia which could produce as many as a hundred thousand automobiles every year. This plant was meant chiefly for tractors.

Another activity of the Soviets, which brought them into conflict with foreign interests, was the production and sale abroad of oil and petrol. In Azerbaijan and Georgia in the Caucasus there is a rich oil producing area. Probably this is part of the larger oil area which spreads to Persia, Mosul and Iraq. Baku on the Caspian Sea is the great oil city of South Russia. The Soviets started selling their oil and petrol abroad at cheaper rates than those charged by the great oil companies. These oil companies, like the Standard Oil Co. of America, and the Anglo-Persian, the Royal Dutch Shell Co., and others, are very powerful and practically controlled the petrol supply of the world. The underselling by the Soviet caused great loss to them and angered them greatly. They started a campaign against Soviet oil, calling it 'stolen oil', because the oil wells in the Caucasus had been confiscated by the Soviet from their previous capitalist owners. After a while, however, they came to terms with this 'stolen oil'.

I have been constantly referring to the 'Soviet' or Soviets in this and other letters. Sometimes I have talked of 'Russia' doing this or that. I have used all these words rather loosely to mean the same thing and I must now tell you what this thing was and is. Of course you know that the Soviet Republic was proclaimed in November, 1917, in Petrograd after the Bolshevik Revolution. The Tsarist Empire was not a

compact national state. Russia proper dominated over a large number of subject nationalities both in Europe and in Asia. There were nearly two hundred of such nationalities and they varied tremendously. In the Tsar's time they were treated as subject peoples and their languages and cultures were to a greater or less extent suppressed. Practically nothing was done for the improvement of the backward peoples in Central Asia. The Jews, although they had no special area to call their own, were one of the worst treated of the minority communities and Jewish "pagrows" or massacres were notorious. This led to many people from these oppressed nationalities joining the Russian revolutionary movement, although their chief interest was in a national revolution and not a social one. The Provisional Government after the February Revolution of 1917 made many promises to these nationalities but in effect did nothing. Lenin had, on the other hand, from the early days of the Bolshevik Party, long before the revolution, insisted on giving each nationality the full right of self-determination even to the extent of complete separation and independence. This was a part of the old Bolshevik programme. Immediately after the Revolution the Bolsheviks, now the government of the country, reaffirmed their faith in this principle of self-determination.

During the Civil War the Tsarist Empire went to pieces and, for a while, the Soviet Republic only controlled a small area round Moscow and Leningrad. Encouraged by the western powers, several nationalities bordering the Baltic Sea—Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania—became independent states. So also of course Poland. As the Russian Soviet triumphed in the Civil War and foreign armies withdrew, separate and independent Soviet governments grew up in Siberia and Central Asia. These governments, having common aims, were naturally closely allied to each other. In 1923 they joined together to form the Soviet Union, or to give it its full official title, the Union of Socialist and Soviet

Republics. This is often known by its capital letters—the U. S. S. R.

Since 1923 there have been some changes in the number of Union republics, as in one or two cases republics have split up into them. At present, I believe, there are seven Union republics:

- (1) Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic or the R. S. F. S. R.
- (2) White Russia S. S. R.
- (3) Ukraine S. S. R.
- (4) Trans-Caucasian Socialist Federative S. R.
- (5) Turkmenistan or Turkmen S. S. R.
- (6) Uzbek S. S. R.
- (7) Tadjikistan or Tadjik S. S. R.

Mongolia is also in some kind of alliance with the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union is thus a federation of several republics. Some of these federating republics are themselves federations. Thus the Russian S. F. S. R. is a federation of twelve autonomous republics, and the Trans-Caucasian S. F. S. R. is a federation of three republics: the Azerbaijan S. S. R., Georgia S. S. R., and Armenia S. S. R. Besides these numerous inter-related and inter-dependent republics there are many 'national' and 'autonomous' regions within the republics. The object of introducing so much autonomy everywhere is to encourage each nationality to keep its own culture and language and to have as much freedom as possible. As far as possible an attempt has been made to avoid the domination of one national or racial group over another. This Soviet solution of the minorities problem has interest for us as we have to face a difficult minority problem ourselves. The Soviets difficulties appear to have been far greater than ours for they had 182 different nationalities to deal with. Their solution of the problem has been very successful. They went to the extreme length of recognizing each separate nationality and encouraging it to carry on its work and education

in its own language. This was not merely to please the separatist tendencies of different minorities, but because it was felt that real education and cultural progress could only take effect for the masses if the native tongue was used. And the results achieved already have been remarkable.

In spite of this tendency to introduce lack of uniformity in the Union, the different parts are coming far nearer to each other than they ever did under the centralised government of the Tsars. The reason is that they have common ideals and they are all working together in a common enterprise. Each Union republic has the right to separate from the Union whenever it wants to, but there is little chance of its doing so, because of the great advantages of federation of socialist republics in the face of the hostility of the capitalist world.

The principal republic of the Union is of course the Russian—the R. S. F. S. R. This spreads out from Leningrad right across Siberia. White Russia S. S. R. lies next to Poland. Ukraine is in the south along the shores of the Black Sea; it is the granary of Russia. Trans-Caucasia is, as its name tells us, across the Caucasus mountains, between the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea. One of the Trans-Caucasian republics is Armenia which was for so long the scene of frightful massacres by Turk and Armenian. Now as a Soviet republic it seems to have settled down to peaceful activities. On the other side of the Caspian Sea we have the three Central Asian republics—Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan which has the famous cities of Bokhara and Samarqand and Tadjikistan. Tadjikistan lies just north of Afghanistan and is the nearest Soviet territory to India.

These Central Asian republics have a special interest for us because of our age-old contacts with Middle Asia. They are even more fascinating, because of the remarkable progress they have made during the past few

years. Under the Tsars they were very backward and superstitious countries with hardly any education and their women mostly in *purdah*. To-day they are ahead of India in many respects.

THE PIATILETKA OR RUSSIA'S FIVE YEARS' PLAN

July 9, 1933

Lenin, so long as he lived, was the unchallenged leader of Soviet Russia. To his final decision everyone bowed; when there were conflicts, his word was law and brought together the warring sections in the Communist Party. Trouble came inevitably after his death when rival groups and rival forces fought for mastery. To the outside world, and to a lesser extent in Russia also, Trotsky was the outstanding person among the Bolsheviks after Lenin. It was Trotsky who had taken a leading part in the October Revolution, and it was he who, faced by stupendous difficulties, created the Red Army which triumphed in the Civil War and against foreign intervention. And yet, Trotsky was a new comer to the Bolshevik Party, and the old Bolsheviks, Lenin apart, neither liked him nor trusted him greatly. One of these old Bolsheviks, Stalin, had become general secretary of the Communist Party and as such he was in control of the dominant and most powerful organisation in Russia. Between Trotsky and Stalin there was no love lost. They hated each other and they were wholly unlike each other. Trotsky was a brilliant writer and orator and had also proved himself a great organiser and man of action. He had a keen and flashing intellect, evolving theories of revolution, and hitting out at his opponents with words that stung like whips and scorpions. Stalin seemed to be a commonplace man beside him, silent, unimposing, far from brilliant. And yet he was also a great organiser, a great and heroic fighter, and a man of iron will. Indeed he

has come to be known as "the man of steel". There was no room in the Communist Party for both these towering personalities.

The conflict between Stalin and Trotsky was a personal one, but it was also something more than that. Each of them represented a different policy, a different method of developing the revolution. Trotsky had, many years before the Revolution, worked out a theory of 'Permanent Revolution'. According to this, it was not possible for a single country, however advantageously situated it might be, to establish full socialism. Real socialism would only come after a world revolution as only then could the peasantry be effectively socialised. Socialism was the next higher stage in economic development after capitalism. As capitalism became international, it broke down, as we see happening in the greater part of the world to-day. Only socialism could work this international structure to advantage, hence the inevitability of socialism. That was the Marxist theory. But if an attempt was made to work socialism in a single country, that is, nationally and not internationally, this would mean a going back to a lower economic stage. Internationalism was the necessary foundation for all progress, including socialist progress, and to go back from it was neither possible nor desirable. According to Trotsky, therefore, it was not economically possible to build up socialism in a separate country, even in the Soviet Union, big as it was. There was so much for which the Soviets had to rely on the industrial countries of Western Europe. It was like the co-operation of the city and the village or rural areas; the industrial west was the city, and Russia was largely rural. Politically also, Trotsky was of opinion, that a separate socialist country could not survive for long in a capitalist environment. The two were—and we have seen how true this is—wholly incompatible with each other. Either the capitalist countries would crush the socialist country, or there would be social revolutions in the capitalist countries and socialism would be established

everywhere. For some time, of course, or some years, the two may exist side by side in an unstable equilibrium.

To a large extent this seems to have been the view of all the Bolshevik leaders before and after the Revolution. They waited impatiently for world revolution, or at any rate revolutions in some European countries. For many months there was thunder in the air of Europe but the storm passed off without bursting. Russia settled down to NEP and a more or less humdrum life. Trotsky thereupon raised the cry of alarm and pointed out that the revolution was in danger unless a more aggressive policy aiming at world revolution was followed. This challenge resulted in a mighty duel between Trotsky and Stalin, a conflict which shook the Communist Party for some years. The conflict resulted in the complete victory of Stalin chiefly because he was the master of the Party machine. Trotsky and his supporters were treated as enemies of the Revolution and driven out from the Party. Trotsky was at first sent to Siberia and then exiled outside the Union.

The immediate conflict between Stalin and Trotsky had taken place on Stalin's proposal to adopt an aggressive agrarian policy to win over the peasant to socialism. This was an attempt to build up socialism in Russia, apart from what happened in other countries, and Trotsky rejected it and stuck to his theory of 'permanent revolution', without which, he said, the peasantry could not be fully socialised. As a matter of fact Stalin adopted many of Trotsky's suggestions but he did so in his own way, not in Trotsky's. Referring to this, Trotsky has written in his autobiography: "In politics, however, it is not merely *what*, but *how* and *who* that decides."

So the great struggle between the two giants ended and Trotsky was pushed off the stage where he had played such a brave and brilliant part. He had to leave the Soviet Union of which he had been one of the principal architects. Nearly all the capitalist countries were afraid of this dynamic personality and would not admit

him. England refused him admittance as did most other European countries. At last he found a refuge in Turkey and he lives now in Prinkipo, which is, I believe, a little island off Istanbul. Freed from the cares and responsibilities of office and other work, he can devote himself to writing and he has done so with brilliant results. His latest work has been the *History of the Russian Revolution*. He is still in the prime of life—he is in the early fifties—and the future may yet hold much in the way of activity for him. But whatever the future may contain, he has a secure corner in world history, and the dramatic struggle which ended his career in Soviet Russia seems to have added an artistic, though tragic, touch to a brilliant and unique life. Sitting at Prinkipo he goes on criticising Stalin and his colleagues in biting language and a regular Trotskyite party has grown up in many parts of the world. This wing of communism is not approved of by the official Communist Party which takes its law from the Communist International, and this International is under Stalin's dominance.

Having disposed of Trotsky, Stalin devoted himself to his new agrarian policy with extraordinary courage. He had to face a difficult situation. There was distress and unemployment among the intellectuals and there had even been strikes of workers. He taxed the *kulaks* or the rich peasants heavily and then devoted this money to building up rural collective farms, that is, big co-operative farms in which large numbers of farmers worked together and shared the profits. The *kulaks* and richer peasants resented this policy and became very angry with the Soviet government. They were afraid that their cattle and farm materials would be polled with those of their poorer neighbours, and because of this fear they actually destroyed their live-stock. There was such a great destruction of live-stock that in the following year there was an acute shortage of food stuffs, meat and dairy produce.

This was an unexpected blow to Stalin but he clung

on grimly to his programme. Indeed he developed it and made it into a mighty plan, covering the whole Union, for both agriculture and industry. The peasant was to be brought near to industry by means of enormous model state farms and collective farms, and the whole country was to be industrialised by the erection of huge factories, hydro-electric power works, the working of mines, and the like; and, side by side with this, a host of other activities relating to education, science, co-operative buying and selling, building houses for millions of workers and generally raising their standards of living, etc., were to be undertaken. This was the famous "Five Years' Plan" or the *Piatiletka* as the Russians called it. It was a colossal programme, ambitious and difficult of achievement even in a generation by a wealthy and advanced country. For backward and poor Russia to attempt it seemed to be the height of folly.

This Five Years' Plan had been drawn up after the most careful thought and investigation. The whole country had been surveyed by scientists and engineers, and numerous experts had discussed the problem of fitting in one part of the programme into another. For the real difficulty came in this fitting in. There was not much point in having a huge factory if the raw material for it was lacking; and even if raw material was available, it had to be brought to the factory. So the problem of transport had to be tackled and railways built, and railways required coal, so coal mines had to be worked. The factory itself wanted power for its working. To supply it with this power, electricity was produced by the water-power obtained from damming up great rivers, and this electric power was then sent over the wires to the factories and farms, and for the lighting of cities and villages. Then again all this required engineers, mechanics and trained workers and it is no easy matter to produce scores of thousands of trained men and women within a short time. Motor tractors could be sent to the farms by the thousand but

who was to work them?

These are but a few instances to give you an idea of the amazing complexity of the problems raised by the Five Years' Plan. A single mistake would have far reaching results; a weak or backward link in the chain of activity would delay or stop a whole series. But Russia had one great advantage over the capitalist countries. Under capitalism all these activities are left to individual initiative and chance, and owing to competitions there is waste of effort. There is no co-ordination between different producers or different sets of workers, except the chance co-ordination which arises in the buyers and sellers coming to the same market. There is, in brief, no planning on a wide scale. Individual concerns may and do plan their future activities, but most of this individual planning consists in attempts to overreach or get the better of other individual concerns. Nationally, this results in the very opposite of planning; it means excess and want side by side. The Soviet government had the advantage of controlling all the different industries and activities in the whole Union and so it could draw up and try to work a single co-ordinated plan in which every activity found its proper place. There would be no waste in this, except such waste as might come from errors of calculation or working, and even such errors could be rectified far sooner with a unified control than otherwise.

The object of the Plan was to lay down the solid foundations of industrialism in the Soviet Union. The idea was not to put up some factories to produce the goods which everyone needs, such as cloth, etc. This would have been easy enough by getting machinery from abroad, as is done in India, and fixing it up. Such industries, producing consumable goods, are called 'light industries'. These light industries necessarily depend on the 'heavy industries', the iron and steel and machine-making industries, which supply the machinery and equipment for the light industries, as well as engines, etc. The Soviet government looked far ahead and

decided to concentrate on these basic or heavy industries in the Five Years' Plan. In this way the foundations of industrialism would be firmly laid and it would be easy to have the light industries afterwards. The heavy industries would also make Russia less dependent on foreign countries for machinery or war material.

This choice in favour of heavy industry seems to have been the obvious one under the circumstances, but it meant a far greater effort and tremendous suffering for the people. Heavy industries are far more expensive than light ones and, a more vital difference, they do not begin to pay for a much longer time. A textile factory starts making cloth and this can be sold to the people immediately; so also in regard to other light industries producing consumable goods. But an iron and steel factory might produce steel rails and locomotives. These cannot be consumed or even used till a railway line is built. This takes time and till then a great deal of money is locked up in the concern and the country is the poorer for it.

For Russia, therefore, this building of heavy industries at a tremendous pace meant a very great sacrifice. All this construction, all this machinery that came from outside, had to be paid for, and paid for in gold and cash. How was this to be done? The people of the Soviet Union tightened their belts and starved and deprived themselves of even necessary articles so that payment could be made abroad. They sent their food-stuffs abroad and with the price obtained for them, paid for the machinery. They sent everything they could find a market for: wheat, rye, barley, corn, vegetables, fruits, eggs, butter, meat, fowls, honey, fish, caviare, sugar, oils, confectionary, etc. Sending these good articles meant that they did without them. The Russian people had no butter, or very little of it, because it went abroad to pay for machinery. And so with many other goods.

This mighty effort embodied in the Five Years' Plan began in 1929. Again the spirit of revolution was abroad, the call of an ideal stirred the masses and made

them devote all their energy into the new struggle. This struggle was not against a foreign enemy or an internal foe. It was a struggle against the backward conditions of Russia, against the remains of capitalism, against the low standards of living. Almost with enthusiasm they put up with further sacrifices and lived a hard ascetic life; they sacrificed the present for the great future that seemed to beckon to them and of which they were the proud and privileged builders.

Nations have, in the past, concentrated all their efforts to the accomplishment of one great task but this has been so in times of war only. During the World War, Germany and England and France lived for one purpose only—to win the war. To that purpose everything else was subordinated. Soviet Russia, for the first time in history, concentrated the whole strength of the nation in a peaceful effort to build and not to destroy, to raise a backward country industrially and within a framework of socialism. But the privation, especially of the upper and middle class peasantry was very great, and often it seemed that the whole ambitious scheme would collapse, and perhaps carry the Soviet government with it. It required immense courage to hold on. Many prominent Bolsheviks thought that the strain and suffering caused by the agricultural programme was too great and there should be a relaxation. But not so Stalin. Grimly and silently, he held on. He was no talker, he hardly spoke in public. He seemed to be the iron image of an inevitable fate going ahead to the predestined goal. And something of his courage and determination spread among the members of the Communist Party and other workers in Russia.

A continuous propaganda in favour of the Five Years' Plan kept up the enthusiasm of the people and whipped them up to fresh endeavour. Great public interest was taken in the building of the great hydro-electric works and dams and bridges and factories and communal farms. Engineering was the most popular profession and newspapers were full of technical details

about great feats of engineering. The desert and the steppes were peopled and great new towns grew up round each big industrial concern. New roads, new canals and new railways, mostly electric railways, were built, and air services developed. A chemical industry was built up, a war industry, and a tool industry, and the Soviet Union began producing tractors, automobiles, high power locomotives, motor engines, turbines, aeroplanes. Electricity spread over large areas, and the radio came into common use. Unemployment disappeared completely as there was so much building and other work to be done that all available workers were absorbed. Indeed many qualified engineers came from foreign countries and were welcomed. It is worth remembering that this was the time when depression spread all over Western Europe and America and unemployment increased to enormous figures.

The work of the Five Years' Plan did not go on smoothly. There was often great trouble and lack of co-ordination and upsets and waste. But in spite of all this the tempo of work went on increasing and the demand always was more and more work. And then came the Slogan 'The Five Years' Plan in Four Years' as if five years had not been a short enough time for this amazing programme! The Plan formally came to an end on December 31, 1932, that is at the end of four years. And immediately, from January 1, 1933, a new Five Years' Plan was started!

People often argue about the Five Years' Plan and some say it was a tremendous success, and others call it a failure. It is easy enough to point out where it has failed for in many respects it has not come up to expectations. There is a vast disproportion in many things in Russia to-day, and the chief lack is that of trained and expert workers. There are more factories than qualified engineers to run them, more restaurants and kitchens than qualified cooks! These disproportions will no doubt soon disappear or at any rate lessen. One thing is clear: that the Five Years' Plan has completely

changed the force of Russia. From a feudal country it has suddenly become an advanced industrial country. There has been an amazing cultural advance; and the social services, the system of social health and accident insurance, are the most inclusive and advanced in the world. In spite of privation and want, the terrible fear of unemployment and starvation which hangs over workers in other countries, has gone. There is a new sense of economic security among the people.

The argument about the success or otherwise of the 'Five Years' Plan' is rather a pointless one. The answer to it is really the present state of the Soviet Union. And a further answer is the fact that this Plan has impressed itself on the imagination of the world. Everybody talks of 'planning' now and Five Year and Ten Year and Three Year plans. It has come to this that even Indian governors, who are generally about a generation behind the times, even they talk glibly now of plans and planning. The Soviets have put magic in the word.

THE SOVIET UNION'S DIFFICULTIES, FAILURE AND SUCCESSES

July 11, 1933

The Five Years' Plan of Soviet Russia was a colossal undertaking. It was really a number of big revolutions tacked on together, especially an agricultural revolution which substituted large-scale collective and mechanised farming for the old-fashioned small-scale methods, and an industrial revolution which industrialised Russia at a tremendous pace. But the most interesting feature of the Plan was the spirit that lay behind it, for this was a new spirit in politics and industry. This spirit was the spirit of science, and attempt to apply a thought-out scientific method to the building up of society. No such thing had been done before in any country, even the most advanced ones, and it is this application of the methods of science to human and social affairs that is the outstanding feature of Soviet planning. It is because of this that all the world is talking of planning now, but it is difficult to plan effectively when the very basis of the social system, like the capitalistic system, rests on competition and the protection of vested rights in property. And so all the talk of planning and co-operation between the capitalist countries ends in nothing but empty talk.

But, as I have told you, this Five Years' Plan brought much suffering, and difficulties, and dislocation. And people paid a terrible price for it. Most of them paid this price willingly and accepted the sacrifices and sufferings for a few years in the hope of a better time afterwards; some paid the price unwillingly and because of the compulsion of the Soviet government. Among

those who suffered most were the *kulaks* or richer peasants. With their greater wealth and special influence, they did not fit in with the new scheme of things. They were capitalistic elements which prevented the collective farms from developing on socialist lines. Often they opposed this collectivisation, sometimes they entered the collectives to weaken them from inside or to make undue personal profits out of them. The Soviet government came down heavily on them. The government was also very hard on many middle class people whom it suspected of espionage and sabotage on behalf of its enemies. Because of this suspicion, probably based on facts in some cases, large numbers of engineers were punished and sent to gaol. As engineers were especially wanted for the numerous big schemes that were in hand, this meant injury to the Plan itself.

Disproportions there were almost everywhere. The transport system lagged behind and so the goods that were produced in factories and fields often had to wait for transport facilities and this upset work elsewhere. The greatest difficulties was the lack of competent experts and engineers.

During these years of the Five Years' Plan the world, or rather the capitalistic world, was experiencing the greatest depression that it had ever known. Trade was sinking, factories closing up, unemployment growing. Agriculturists all over the world had been very hard hit by a great fall in prices of food-stuffs and raw materials. The tremendous activity and employment in the Soviet Union contrasted remarkably with the inactivity and unemployment elsewhere. The Union seemed to be unaffected by the world depression, the basis of its economy was quite different. But the Soviet did not escape the results of the depression; they crept in indirectly and added greatly to the Soviet's difficulties. I have told you that the Soviet was buying machinery abroad and it paid for this by selling its agricultural produce in foreign countries. As the price of food-stuffs, etc., fell in the world market the Soviet got less

money for its exports. But it had to raise enough gold to pay for the machinery bought by it and so it exported more and more food-stuffs. In this way the world trade depression and fall in prices caused loss to the Soviet and upset many of their calculations. And this led to a further shortage of many necessities in the country and greater hardship.

While on the one hand there was a growing shortage of food-stuffs, on the other hand there was a tremendous growth of population all over the Union. This rapid growth, out of all proportion to the relatively slow progress of agricultural production, was the Soviet's chief problem. The population of the present territory of the U. S. S. R. before the Revolution was 130 millions. Observe the growth in subsequent years, in spite of the enormous losses of the Civil War:

In 1917 the population was 130 millions.

In 1926 " " 149 "

In 1929 " " 154 "

In 1930 " " 158 "

In 1933 (spring-estimate) was 165 millions.

Thus there has been an increase of 35 millions in a little over fifteen years, that is an increase of 26 per cent., which is extraordinary.

Not only did the population grow as a whole all over the Soviet Union but it grew especially in the cities. The old cities grew bigger and bigger and new industrial towns rose up even in the deserts and the steppes. Vast numbers of peasants flocked to the cities from their villages attracted by the work to be done in the building up of the many huge enterprises of the Five Years' Plan. In 1917 there were 24 cities in the U. S. S. R. each with a population of over 100000. In 1926 there were 31 such cities, and in 1933 there were over fifty. Within fifteen years the Soviet had built over a hundred industrial towns. From 1913 to 1932, Moscow doubled its population, going up from 1600000 to 3200000; Leningrad added another million and nearly reached the three million mark; Baku in Trans-Caucasia

also doubled its population from 334000 to 660000. Although the urban population went up from 20 millions in 1913 to 35 millions in 1932.

A peasant who goes to a city and becomes a labourer there ceases to be a food producer as he was in his village. As a labourer or worker in a factory he may produce machine goods or tools but, so far as food is concerned, he is only a consumer now. The great exodus of peasants from village to city thus meant the transformation of food producers into food consumers only. This became another factor in making the food situation difficult.

There was yet another factor. The growing industry of the country wanted more and more raw materials for the factories. Thus cotton was required by the cloth factories. Cotton and other raw materials therefore were sown in many areas instead of food crops. This again reduced the food supply.

The tremendous growth of population of the Soviet Union was in itself a remarkable sign of prosperity. It was not due, as in America, to immigration from outside. It showed that in spite of the privations and hardships of the people there was no actual starvation. A severe system of rationing managed to supply the absolutely necessary articles of food to the population. Competent observers tell us that this rapid growth of population is largely due to a feeling of economic security among the people. Children are no longer a burden to the family as the State is prepared to look after them, to feed them and educate them. Another reason is the growth of sanitation and medical facilities which have resulted in reducing the infant mortality rate from 27 to 12 per cent. In Moscow the general mortality rate in 1913 was over 23 per thousand; in 1931 it was under 13 per thousand.

To add to the many difficulties about the shortage of food, there was a drought in some parts of the Union in 1931. In 1931 and 1932 there were also war scares in the Far East and the Soviet, fearing a war brought on

by a Japanese attack, in conjunction with other capitalist powers, began to hoard grain and other food-stuffs for the army in case of need. The danger of war against the Soviet is real enough and is a continuing one, but the Bolsheviks live in constant dread of it and there are frequent scares. There is an old Russian saying: 'Fear has big eyes'—how very true it is whether you apply it to little children or to communities and nations! Because there can be no real peace between communism and capitalism, and the imperialist nations are very keen on suppressing communism, and manoeuvre and intrigue to that end, the nerves of the Bolsheviks are always on edge and their eyes grow big at the least provocation. Often enough they have reason for anxiety and they have had to meet even internally wide-spread attempts at sabotage or destruction of their factories or other big concerns.

Nineteen-thirtytwo was a very critical year for the Soviet Union and even now—I write in July, 1933—the crisis is not passed. The government took the most drastic steps against sabotage and against the stealing of communal property, which had occurred in many of the communal farms. Ordinarily there is no death penalty in Russia but it has been introduced in cases of counter-revolution. The Soviet government has decreed that the stealing of communal property is equivalent to counter-revolution and is therefore punishable by death. For, says Stalin: "If the capitalists have pronounced *private* property sacred and inviolable, thus achieving in their time a strengthening of the capitalist order, then we communists must so much the more pronounce *public* property sacred and inviolable, in order thus to strengthen the new socialist farms of economy."

The Soviet government also took steps to ease the strain in other ways. The most important of these was the permission given to the collective and individual farms to sell their surplus produce directly in the city markets. This reminds one, to some extent, of NEP

coming after the period of militant communism in 1921, but the Soviet Union is very different from what it was then. It has gone a good way on the road to socialism; it is industrialised and its agriculture has been largely communalised.

During the last four years 200000 collective farms were organised and there were also about 5000 state farms. These state farms are supposed to be models for the others. They are enormous; one of them, the 'Gigant' farm, having 5000000 acres. During this period 120000 more tractors have been introduced. Nearly two-thirds of the peasants are now members of these collectives.

Another activity that has grown astonishingly is that of the co-operative organisation. The consumers' Co-operative Society had a membership of 26½ millions in 1928; in 1932 the membership was 75 millions. This society has a chain of wholesale and retail stores stretching from one end of the Union to the other, even to the remotest corner.

There is no point in my filling this letter with a list of the new industries and factories that swarm in Russia now. The list would be long and impressive. But I must tell you that during the last six years two million workers' families received new apartments to live in, and, as I have already said somewhere, the workers' health and living conditions have been protected by a most comprehensive system of social insurance.

The 1st of January, 1933, saw the commencement of the second Five Years Plan. This is ambitious also but it is an easier one than the former. It is directed towards the building up of light industries which will result in raising the standard of living rapidly. It is hoped to provide some rewards now in the shape of more comfort and better living conditions after the strain and privation of the past four years. It is not necessary to go abroad now for most of the machinery required as the Soviet heavy industries can supply this machinery. This will also relieve the Soviet from

having to send large quantities of food abroad to help in payment for goods purchased.

Stalin, addressing a congress of peasants from collective farms recently said:

"Our immediate task is to make all collectivized peasants well-to-do. Yes, comrades, well-to-do..... Sometimes people say: if there is socialism why should we still work? We worked before; we work now. Isn't it time we quit working?... No, socialism is built on labour..... Socialism demands that all men work honestly, not for others, not for the rich, not for the exploiters, but for themselves, for society."

Work remains and must remain, though, in the future, it is likely to be pleasanter and lighter than in the trying four years of the Five Years' Plan. Indeed the maxim of the Soviet Union is: "He that will not work, neither shall he eat." But the Bolsheviks have added a new motive for work, the motive to work for social betterment. In the past idealists and stray individuals have been moved to activity by this incentive, but there is no previous instance of society as a whole accepting and reacting to this motive. The very basis of capitalism was competition and individual profit always at the expense of others. This profit motive is giving place to the social motive in the Soviet Union, and, as an American writer says, workers in Russia are learning that "from the acceptance of mutual dependence comes independence of want and fear." This elimination of the terrible fear of poverty and insecurity, which bears down upon the masses everywhere, is a great achievement. It is said that this relief has almost put an end to mental diseases in the Soviet Union.

And so, these strenuous four years in the U. S. S. R. have seen growth everywhere and in almost everything, painful and disproportionate growth, but still a spreading of cities and industry and huge collective farms and mighty co-operatives and trade and population, and also culture and science and learning. Above all, they have seen the growth of a unity and solidarity among the numerous different peoples that inhabit the U. S. S. R. from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean and the Pamir

and Hindu Kush mountains of Central Asia.

The crisis still continues in the Union though perhaps the worst of it is past. Some months ago there were actually famine conditions in some parts of the Caucasus. The whole Union is now looking forward anxiously and yet hopefully to the next harvest. There was a great sowing campaign last spring (1933) and the prospects are that the harvest will be an abundant one. If this happens then the long four-year old writer of strain and anxiety will be past and Russia will breathe hopefully the fresh and inspiring air of spring.

I feel tempted to write to you about the progress in education and science and culture generally in the U. S. S. R., but I must restrain myself. I shall tell you just a few odd facts which might interest you. The educational system in Russia is supposed by many competent judges to be the best and most up-to-date in existence. Illiteracy has almost been ended and the most surprising advances have been made in backward areas like Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in Central Asia. In this Central Asian area there were 126 schools with 6200 pupils in 1913; in 1932 there were 6975 schools with 700000 pupils, of whom over one-third were girls. Universal compulsory education has been introduced. To appreciate this remarkable progress, you must remember that till recently girls were kept in seclusion and not allowed to appear in public in this part of the world. It is said that this rapid progress has been due to the use of the Latin alphabet which made primary education far easier than with the various local alphabets. You will remember my telling you about Kemal Pasha's adoption of the Latin script or alphabet in place of the old Arabic one. He got the idea and the alphabet, varied to suit other languages, from the Soviet experiment. In 1927 the Caucasian republics discarded the Arabic script and adopted the Latin one. This was very successful in removing illiteracy, and most of the other nationalities in the Soviet Union adopted the Latin script—the Chinese, Mongols, Turks, Tartars,

Buriats, Bashkirs, Tadjiks and many others. The language used was always the local one; only the script was changed.

You will be interested to learn that over two-thirds of all the school children in the Soviet Union are served with hot luncheons in schools. This is of course free of charge, and education itself is quite free, as it must be in a workers' State.

The growth of literacy and the progress of education have created a huge reading class and probably more books and newspapers are printed than in any other country. Mostly these books are serious and 'heavy' books, and not the light novels of other countries. The Russian worker is so excited about engineering and electricity that he prefers reading books about them to reading story books. But for children there are the most delightful books, including even fairy tales, though, I believe, orthodox Bolsheviks do not approve of fairy stories.

In science Soviet Russia is already in the first rank, both in pure science and in its numerous applications. Numerous huge institutes in various branches of science and experimental stations have grown up. In Leningrad there is an enormous Institute of Plant Industry which possesses as many as 28000 different varieties of wheat! This institute has been experimenting with methods of sowing rice by aeroplane.

The old palaces of the Tsars and the nobility have now become museums and rest houses and sanatoria for the people. Near Leningrad there is a small town which used to be called Tsarkoe Selo (meaning 'The Tsar's Village') as it contained two imperial palaces and the Tsar used to live there in summer. The name has now been changed to Detskoe Selo ('The Children's Village') and I suppose the old palaces now serve the purposes of children and young people. Children and the young are the favoured persons in Soviet land to-day and they get the best of everything even though others might suffer lack. It is for them that the present

generation labours for it is they who will inherit the socialised and scientific state, if that finally comes into existence in their time. In Moscow there is a great 'Central Institute for the Protection of Mother and Child'.

Women in Russia have perhaps more freedom than in any other country and at the same time they have special protection from the State. They enter all professions and quite large numbers of them are engineers. The first woman ambassador appointed by any government was the old Bolshevik Madame Kollontai. Lenin's widow, Krupskaya is, I believe, the head of a branch of the Soviet education department.

The Soviet Union is an exciting land with all these changes taking place from day to day and hour to hour. But no part of it is so exciting and fascinating as the desert steppes of Siberia and the old-world valleys of Central Asia, both cut off for generations from the drift of human change and advance, and now bounding ahead at a tremendous pace. To give you some idea of these rapid changes, I shall tell you something about Tadjikistan, which was perhaps one of the most backward areas of the Soviet Union.

Tadjikistan lies in the valleys of the Pamir mountains, north of the River Oxus, bordering Afghanistan and Chinese Turkestan, and not far from the Indian frontier. It used to be under the Emirs of Bokhara who were vassals of the Russian Tsars. In 1920 there was a local revolution in Bokhara and the Emir was overthrown and a Bokhara Peoples' Soviet Republic established. Civil War followed and it was during these disorders that Enver Pasha, the once popular leader of Turkey, met his death. The Bokhara republic came to be called the Uzbek Socialist Soviet Republic and it became one of the constituent sovereign republics of the U. S. S. R. In 1925 an autonomous Tadjik republic was formed within the Uzbek area. In 1929 Tadjikistan became a sovereign republic and one of the seven member states of the Soviet federation—the U. S. S. R.

Tadjikistan had attained this dignity but it was a small and backward area with a population of under a million, and hardly any proper communications, the only roads being camel tracks. Under the new régime immediate steps were taken to improve roads, irrigation and agriculture, industries, education and health services. Motor roads were built, cotton growing begun and made highly successful owing to irrigation. By the middle of 1931 over sixty per cent. of the cotton plantations were collectivized, and a great part of the grain area was also organised under communal farms. An electric power station was established and eight cotton mills and three oil mills grew up. A railway line was built connecting the country through Uzbekistan to the Soviet Union railway system, and an aeroplane service established making connections with the principal air lines.

In 1929 there was only one dispensary in the country. In 1932 there were 61 hospitals and 37 dental clinics, with 2125 beds and 20 doctors. The progress of education can be judged from the following figures:

- In 1925: only 6 modern schools.
- End of 1926: 113 schools with 2300 students.
- In 1929: 500 schools.
- 1931: over 2000 educational institutions with over 120000 students.

Of course the money spent on education has gone up by a jump. The school budget for 1929-30 was for 8 millions rubles (a ruble at par is about 2 shillings or Re. 1-5-6); for 1930-31 the budget was 28 million rubles. Besides the ordinary schools, kindergartens, training schools, libraries and reading rooms were being opened, and the slogan in 1932 was that illiteracy must be abolished within the next two years. There was a tremendous hunger for knowledge among the people.

Under these conditions the seclusion of women behind the *purdah* could hardly continue and this was rapidly giving way.

All this sounds almost incredible. Can such lightning progress take place? And remember that the country has a population of a little over a million, that is far less than that of Allahabad district! I have taken this information and figures from the report of a competent American observer who visited Tadjikistan early in 1932. Probably many additional changes have taken place since.

It appears that the Soviet Union helped the young Tadjik republic with money for educational and other purposes, because it is the policy of the Union to bring up backward areas. The country however seems to be rich in mineral deposits. Gold, oil and coal have been found, and it is even believed that the gold reserves are very big. In the old days, upto the time of Chengiz Khan, these gold mines were worked but apparently they have not been exploited since.

In 1931 there was a counter-revolutionary rising in Tadjikistan, and many of the richer landowning classes who had run away from the country to Afghanistan, invaded the country. The rising fizzled out because the peasants did not support it.

This letter is getting long and very mixed. But as it is the last letter I propose to write about the Soviet Union I must add to it and tell you about the Soviet's international position now. You know already, if you remember it, that the Soviet signed the Kellogg Peace Pact which was supposed to 'out law' war. There was also the Litvinor Pact of 1929. Russia was indeed terribly keen to have peace and to avoid war and she welcomed every opportunity of ensuring this. As if these Peace Pacts were not enough she made further 'non-aggression' pacts with her neighbours. In November, 1932, she concluded such a non-aggression pact with France. This was an important event in European politics. Among the Soviet Union's neighbours Japan was, I think, the only country which refused to agree to a non-aggression pact. China after a long period of silent hostility and no diplomatic relations,

recognised afresh the Soviet government. This was when China was hard pressed by Japan in Manchuria.

The Soviet's relations with Japan are not good and the Japanese government is constantly provoking and annoying the Soviet in the Far East. Frequently, during the last year or so, there has been talk of war in the Far East, but Russia has pocketed even insults rather than fight. Anglo-Russian friction is a permanent feature of international politics and occasionally there is a glare up. There was such an outburst over a trial of British engineers some months ago in Moscow and this resulted in reprisals and counter-reprisals. But the storm has blown over, and the engineers have been released and normal relations between the countries established. America still does not recognise Russia, although there is plenty of trade between the two countries. There is talk of American recognition now and, it is also said, that England and Japan, the two rivals and potential enemies of Russia, are trying to prevent America from recognising the Soviet government. The Soviets, on the other hand, are very keen on American recognition.

In Germany a new and aggressively violent enemy has arisen in the Nazi government. It is powerless to do much direct harm to Russia at present but it is a great future danger and is already intriguing. Europe is becoming more and more fascist.

Soviet Russia has been behaving internationally very much like a satisfied power, avoiding all trouble, trying to keep the peace at all costs. This of course is the opposite of a revolutionary policy which would aim at fomenting revolution in other countries. It is a national policy and this makes us appreciate the difference between Trotsky's policy of 'permanent revolution' and Stalin's policy of socialism in a single country. One can understand that Russia, terribly busy with her great internal schemes, cannot afford to get into trouble outside. But this necessarily results in trying to behave as a good little girl before the capitalist powers, and in

compromises with imperialist and fascist powers who are her declared enemies. It means giving up the basic policy of the Communist International and this has naturally resulted in Communist Parties in different countries (outside Russia) becoming weak and having no influence. The Soviet Union's policy is to protect itself at all costs whatever might happens to socialism and communism outside.

A World Economic Conference is being held in London as I write this. The conference itself is collapsing but Soviet Russia has taken advantage of the occasion, when all the countries of the world were represented, to get another non-aggression pact signed between herself and her neighbours. Russia, Afghanistan, Estonia, Latvia, Persia, Poland, Roumania, Turkey and Lithuania signed this early in July, 1933. Japan, as before, remains apart.

SCIENCE GOES AHEAD

July 13, 1933

I have written to you at great length about political happenings, and a little about economic changes, all over the world during the post-war years. In this letter I want to write about other matters, and especially about science and its effects.

But before I go on to science, I would remind you again of the very great change in woman's position since the World War. This so-called 'emancipation' of women from legal, social and customary bonds began in the 19th century with the coming of big industries which employed women workers. It made slow progress, and then war conditions hurried up the process, and the after-war years almost completed it. To-day even Tadjikistan, about which I wrote to you in my last letter, has its women doctors and teachers and engineers, who only a few years back were in *purdah*. You and your generation will probably take all this for granted. And yet it is quite a novel thing not only in Asia but in Europe also. Less than a hundred years ago, in 1840, the first 'World's Anti-Slavery Convention' was held in London. Women came as delegates to it from America where the existence of negro slavery was agitating many people. The Convention, however, refused to admit these 'female delegates' on the ground that for any woman to take part in a public meeting was improper and degrading to the sex!

And now let us go to science. In dealing with the Five Years' Plan in Soviet Russia I told you that it was the application of the spirit of science to social affairs. To some extent, though only partly, this spirit has been

at the back of western civilization for the past hundred and fifty years or so. As its influence has grown, the ideas based on unreason and magic and superstition have been pushed aside and methods and process alien to those of science have been opposed. This does not mean that the spirit of science has triumphed completely over unreason and magic and superstition. Far from it. But it has undoubtedly advanced a long way and the nineteenth century saw many of its resounding victories.

I have written to you already of the stupendous changes brought about in the nineteenth century by the application of science to industry and life. The world, and especially Western Europe and North America, were changed out of all recognition; far more than they had changed for thousands of years previously. A surprising enough fact is the enormous increase in the population of Europe during the 19th century. In 1800 the population was 180 millions for the whole of Europe. Slowly, in the course of ages it had risen to that figure. And then it shoots ahead and in 1914 it was 460 millions. During this period also millions of Europeans emigrated to other continents, particularly to America, and we may put their number at about 40 millions. Thus Europe's population went up to about 500 millions from 180 millions in the course of a little over a hundred years. This increase was especially marked in the industrial countries of Europe. England, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, had a population of five millions only and was the poorest country in Western Europe. It became the richest country in the world with a population of 40 millions.

This growth and wealth resulted from greater control over, or rather understanding of, the processes of nature which scientific knowledge made possible. There was great increase in knowledge but do not imagine that this necessarily means an increase in wisdom. Men began to control and exploit the forces of nature without having any clear ideas of what their aim in life was or should be. A powerful automobile is

a useful and desirable thing but one must know where to go in it. Unless properly guided it may jump over a precipice. The president of the British Association of Science said last year that "the command of Nature has been put into man's hands before he knows how to command himself."

Most of us use the products of science—railways, aeroplanes, electricity, wireless and thousands of others—without thinking of how they came into existence. We take them for granted as if we were entitled to them as of right. And we are very proud of the fact that we live in an advanced age and are ourselves so very 'advanced'. Now there is no doubt that our age is a very different one from previous ages, and I think it is perfectly correct to say that it is far more advanced. But that is a different thing from saying that we as individuals or groups are more advanced. It would be the height of absurdity to say that because an engine-driver can run an engine and Plato or Socrates could not, therefore the engine-driver is a more advanced or superior person to Plato or Socrates. But it would be perfectly correct to say that the engine itself is a more advanced method of locomotion than Plato's Chariot was.

We read so many books now-a-days, most of them, I am afraid, rather silly books. In the old days people read few books but they were good books and they knew them well. One of the greatest of European philosophers, a man full of learning and wisdom, was Spinoza. He lived in the seventeenth century in Amsterdam. It is said that his library consisted of less than sixty volumes.

It is well therefore for us to realise that the great increase in knowledge in the world does not necessarily make us better or wiser. We must know how to use that knowledge properly before we can fully profit by it. We must know whither to go before we rush ahead on our powerful car. We must, that is, have some idea of what the aim and object of life should be. Vast numbers

of people to-day have no such notion and never worry themselves about it. They live in an age of science but the ideas that govern them and their actions belong to ages long past. It is natural that difficulties and conflicts arise. A clever monkey may learn to drive a car but he is hardly a safe chauffeur.

Modern knowledge is amazingly intricate and wide-spread. Tens of thousands of investigators work away continuously, each experimenting in his particular department, each burrowing away in his own patch, and adding tiny bit by bit to the mountain of knowledge. The field of knowledge is so vast that each worker has to be a specialist in his own line. Often he is unaware of other departments of knowledge, and thus, though he is very learned in some branches of knowledge, he is unlearned about many others. It becomes difficult for him to take a wise view of the whole field of human activity. He is not cultured in the old sense of the world.

There are of course individuals who have risen above this narrow specialization and, while being specialists themselves, can take a wider view. Undeterred by war and human troubles, these people have been carrying on scientific researches and during the last fifteen years or so have made remarkable contributions to knowledge. The greatest scientist of the day is supposed to be Albert Einstein, a German Jew, who has recently been turned out of Germany by the new Hitler government because they do not approve of Jews!

Einstein discovered some new fundamental laws of physics, affecting the whole universe, through intricate calculations in mathematics, and thereby he varied some of Newton's laws which had been accepted without question for two hundred years. Einstein's theory was confirmed in a most interesting way. According to this theory light behaves in a particular way and this could be tested during an eclipse of the sun. When such an eclipse occurred it was found that light rays did behave in that way, and so a conclusion reached by mathema-

tical reasoning was confirmed by actual experiment.

I am not going to try to explain this theory to you because it is very abstruse and my ideas about it are far from clear. It is called the Theory of Relativity. In dealing with the universe; Einstein found that the idea of time and the idea of space were, separately, not applicable. So he discarded both and put forward a new idea in which both were wedded together. This was the idea of space-time.

Einstein dealt with the universe. At the other end of the scale, scientists investigated the infinitely small. Take a pin's point, about as small a thing as you can see with the unaided eye. This pin's point it was proved by scientific methods was, in a way, like a universe in itself! It had molecules buzzing round each other; and each molecule consisted of atoms which also went round and round without touching each other; and each atom consisted of large numbers of electric particles or charges, or whatever they are, protons and electrons, which were also in constant and tremendously fast motion. Smaller still are positrons and neutrons and deuterons; and the average life of a positron has been estimated to be about a thousand-millionth part of a second! All this was, on an infinitely small scale, like the planets and the stars going round and round in space. Remember that the molecule is far too small to be seen even by the most powerful microscope. As for the atoms and the protons and electrons it is difficult even to imagine them. And yet, so advanced is scientific technique that quite a lot of information has been collected about these protons and electrons, and recently the atom was split.

In considering the latest theories of science one's head reels, and it is very difficult to appreciate them. I shall now tell you something even more amazing. We know that our earth, which seems so big to us, is but a minor planet of the Sun, which is itself a very insignificant little star. The whole solar system is but a drop in the ocean of space. Distances are so great in the universe that it takes thousands and millions of years

for light to reach us from some parts of it. Thus when we see a star at night, what we see is not what it is now, but what it was when the ray of light, which now reaches us, left it on its long journey, which may have taken hundreds or thousands of years. This is all very confusing to one's ideas of time and space, and that is why Einstein's Space-time is far more helpful in considering such matters. If we leave out space and only consider time, the past and present gets mixed up. For the star we see is present for us, and yet it is the past that we see. For ought we know it may have ceased to exist long ago, after the light ray started on its journey.

I have said that our Sun is an unimportant little star. There are about a hundred thousand other stars and all these together form what is called a galaxy. Most of the stars that we see at night form this galaxy. But we only see very few of the stars with our unaided eyes. Powerful telescopes help us to see far more. It is calculated by the experts in this science that there are as many as a hundred thousand different galaxies of stars in the universe!

Another astonishing fact. We are told that this universe is an expanding one. A mathematician, Sir James Jeans, compares it to a soap-bubble which is getting bigger and bigger, the universe being the surface of the bubble. And this bubble-like universe is so big that it takes millions and millions of years for light to travel across it.

If your capacity for astonishment is not exhausted, I have something more to tell you about this truly amazing universe. A famous Cambridge astronomer, Sir Arthur Eddington, tells us that our universe is gradually going to pieces, like a clock that is run down, and unless wound up again somehow, will disintegrate. Of course all this happens in millions of years, so we need not worry!

Physics and chemistry were the leading sciences of the nineteenth century. They helped man to gain

command over nature or the outside world. Then scientific man began to look inside and to study himself. Biology became important; this was the study of life in man and animals and plants. Already it has made extraordinary progress, and biologists say that it will be possible soon to produce changes in the character or temperament of a person by injections or other means. Thus it may perhaps be possible for a coward to be converted into a man of courage, or, what is more likely, for a government to deal with its critics and opponents by reducing their powers of resistance in this way.

From biology the next step has been psychology, the science which deals with the mind, with the thoughts and motives and fears and desires of human beings. Science is thus invading new fields and telling us more about ourselves and so perhaps helping us to command ourselves.

Eugenics is also a step from biology. It is the science of race improvement.

It is interesting to notice how the study of certain animals has helped in the development of science. The poor frog cut up to find out how nerves and muscles functioned. The tiny and insignificant little fly which often sits on overripe bananas, hence called the banana fly, has led to more knowledge about heredity than anything else. From careful observations of this fly it has been found how the characteristics of one generation pass on by inheritance to the next generation. To some extent this helps in understanding the working of heredity in human beings.

An even more absurd animal to teach us much is the common grasshopper. Long and careful study of grasshoppers by American observers has shown how sex is determined in animals as well as human beings. We know a great deal now as to how the little embryo, right at the beginning of its career, becomes male or female, developing gradually into a tiny male or female animal, a little boy or girl.

The fourth instance is that of the ordinary

household dog. A famous Russian scientist, Pavlov, who is still carrying on his work although he is 84 years old, began observing dogs carefully, especially noting when their mouths watered at the sight of food. He actually measured this saliva in the dog's mouth. This watering of the dog's mouth at the sight of food was an automatic occurrence, an 'unconditioned reflex' as it was called. Just as when an infant sneezes or yawns or stretches without previous experience.

Then Pavlov tried to produce 'conditioned reflexes', that is, he taught the dog to expect food at a certain signal. The result was that this signal became associated in the dog's mind with food, and produced the same result as food, although no food was present.

These experiments on dogs and their salivas have been made the basis of human psychology, and it has been shown how a human being in infancy has a number of 'unconditioned reflexes' and as he grows he develops more and more 'conditioned reflexes'. In fact all we learn is based on this. We form habits in this way, and we learn languages, etc. Our actions are governed by our reflexes, which of course are both pleasant and unpleasant. There is the common reflex of fear. No knowledge of Pavlov's experiments is necessary for a man to jump away with great rapidity and without thinking, when he sees a snake near him, or even a bit of a string looking like a snake.

Pavlov's experiments have revolutionised the whole science of psychology. Some of them are very interesting but I cannot go into this question any further here. I must add, though, that there are several other important methods of psychological enquiry.

I have given these few instances to you to give you some idea of the methods of scientific work. The old metaphysical way was to talk vaguely about big things which it was not easy, or even possible, to analyse or understand fully. People argued and argued about them and got very heated, but as there was no final test of the truth or otherwise of their arguments, the matter

always remained in the air. They were so busy in arguing about the other world that they did not deign to observe the common things of this world. The method of science is the exact opposite. Careful observations are made of what appear to be trivial and insignificant facts, and these lead to important results. Theories are then framed on these results, and these theories are again checked by further observations and experiments.

This does not mean that science does not go wrong. It often goes wrong and has to retrace its steps. But the scientific method seems to be the only correct way of approaching a question. Science to-day has lost all the arrogance and self-sufficiency which it had during the nineteenth century. It is proud of its achievements and yet it is humble before the vast and ever-widening ocean of knowledge that still lies unexplored. The wise man knows how little he knows; it is the foolish person who imagines he knows everything. And so with science. The more it advances, the less dogmatic it gets and the more hesitating is its answer to the questions that may be put to it. "The progress of science", says Eddington, "is to be measured not by the number of questions we can answer, but by the number of questions we can ask." That is perhaps so, but still science does answer more and more questions, and helps us to understand life, and thus enables us, if we will but take advantage of it, to live a better life, directed to a purpose worth having. It illumines the dark corners of life and makes us face reality, instead of the vague confusion of unreason.

THE GOOD AND BAD APPLICATIONS OF SCIENCE

July 14, 1933

In my last letter I gave you a peep into the wonderland of the latest developments of science. I do not know if this glimpse will interest you and attract you to these realms of thought and achievement. If you have the desire to know more of these subjects you can easily find your way to many books. But remember that human thought is ever advancing, ever grappling with and trying to understand the problems of nature and the universe, and what I tell you to-day may be wholly insufficient and out-of-date tomorrow. To me there is a great fascination in this challenge of the human mind, and how it soars up to the uttermost corners of the universe and tries to fathom its mysteries, and dares to grasp and measure what appear to be the infinitely big as well as the infinitely small.

All this is what is called 'pure' science, that is science which has no direct or immediate effect on life. It is obvious that the Theory of Relativity or the idea of Space-time, or the size of the universe have nothing to do with our day to day lives. Most of these theories depend on the higher mathematics, and these intricate and upper regions of mathematics are, in this sense, pure science. Most people are not much interested in this kind of science; they are naturally far more attracted by the applications of science to every day life. It is this applied science that has revolutionised life during the last hundred and fifty years. Indeed, life to-day is governed and conditioned entirely by these offshoots of science, and it is very difficult for us to imagine existence

without them. People often talk about the good old days of the past, of a golden age that is gone. Some periods of past history are singularly attractive, and in some ways they may even be superior to our time. But even this attraction is probably due more to distance and to a certain vagueness than to anything else, and we are apt to think of an age as being great because of some great men who adorned it and dominated it. The fate of the common people right through history has been a miserable one. Science brought them some relief from their age-long burdens.

Look around you and you will find that most of the things that you can see are somehow connected with science. We travel by the methods of applied science, we communicate with each other in the same way, our food is often produced that way and carried from one place to another. The newspaper we read could not be produced, nor our books, nor the paper I write on or the pen I write with, by methods other than those of science. Sanitation and health and the conquest over some diseases depends on science. For the modern world it is quite impossible to do without applied science. Apart from all other reasons, one reason is a final and conclusive one: without science there would not be enough food for the world's population and half of it or more would die off from starvation. I have told you how population has gone up with a bound during the last hundred years. This swollen population can only live if the help of science is taken to produce food and transport it from one place to another.

Ever since science introduced the big machine into human life there has been a continuous process of improving it. Innumerable little changes are being made from year to year and even month to month which go to making the machine more efficient and less dependent on human labour. These improvements in technique, these advances in technology, as it is called, have become especially rapid during the last thirty years of the twentieth century. The rate of change in

recent years—and it is still going on—has been so tremendous that it is revolutionising industry and methods of production as much as the Industrial revolution of the second half of the eighteenth century. This new revolution is largely due to the increasing use of electricity in production. Thus we have had a great Electrical Revolution in the twentieth century, especially in the United States of America, and this is leading to entirely new conditions of life. Just as the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century led to the Machine Age, the Electrical Revolution is now leading to the Power Age. Electric Power, which is used for industries, railways and numerous other purposes, dominates everything. It was because of this that Lenin, looking for ahead, decided to build all over Soviet Russia huge hydro-electric power works.

This application of electric power to industry, together with other improvements, often results in a great change without costing much. Thus a slight re-arrangement of electrically driven machinery might double the production. This is largely due to the progressive elimination of the human factor which is slow and liable to err. Thus as machines go on improving, fewer workers are employed in them. Huge machines are now controlled by one man handling some levers and switches. This results in increasing production of manufactured goods enormously, and at the same time throwing out many workers from the factory as they are no longer required. At the same time advances in technology are so rapid that often by the time a new machine is installed in a factory, it is itself partly absolute because of new improvements.

The process of machines replacing workers had of course occurred from the early days of machinery and, as I think I have told you, there were many riots in those days and angry workmen broke the new machines. It was found, however, that ultimately machinery resulted in more employment. As a worker could produce far more goods with the help of machinery, his wages went

up and the prices of goods went down. The workers and common people could thus buy more of these goods. Their standards of living went up and the demands for manufactured goods grew. This resulted in more factories being built and more men being employed. Thus although machinery displaced workers in each factory as a whole far more workers were employed because there were many more factories.

This process went on for a long time helped as it was by the exploitation by industrial countries of distant markets in backward countries. During the past few years this process seems to have stopped. Perhaps no further expansion is possible under the present capitalistic system and some change in the system is necessary. Modern industry goes in for 'mass production' but this can only be carried on if the goods so produced are bought by the masses. If the masses are too poor or are unemployed then they cannot buy these goods.

In spite of all this, technical improvements go on ceaselessly and result in machinery displacing men and adding to the unemployed. During the last four years there has been a great depression in trade all over the world, but even this has not prevented technology from advancing. It is said that there have been so many improvements *since 1929* in the United States that millions of people who have been thrown out of work can never be employed even if the production of 1929 is kept up.

This is one of the reasons—there are many others also—which has produced the great problem of the unemployed all over the world, and especially in the advanced industrial countries. It is a curious and inverted problem, for greater production by up-to-date machinery means, or ought to mean, greater wealth for the nation and higher standards of living for everyone. Instead it has resulted in poverty and terrible suffering. One would have thought that a scientific solution of the problem would not be difficult. Perhaps it is not. But

the real difficulty comes in trying to solve it scientifically and reasonably. For in doing so many vested interests are affected and they are powerful enough to control their governments. Then again the problem is essentially an international one and to-day national rivalries prevent an international solution. Soviet Russia is applying the methods of science to similar problems, but because she has to proceed nationally, the rest of the world being capitalist and hostile to her, she has far greater difficulties than she otherwise would have had. This is partly what Trotsky meant by saying that there could be no real socialism in a single country. The world is essentially international to-day although its political structure lags behind and is narrowly national. For socialism to succeed, it will have to be international world socialism. The hands of the clock cannot be put back, nor can the international structure of to-day, incomplete as it is, be suppressed in favour of national isolation. An attempt at the intensification of nationalism, as the fascists are trying to do in various countries, is bound to fail in the end, because it runs counter to the fundamental international character of world economy to-day. It may be, of course, that in so failing it may carry the world with it and involve what is called modern civilization in a common disaster.

The danger of such a disaster is by no means remote and unthinkable. Science, as we have seen, has brought many good things in its train, but science has also added enormously to the horrors of war. States and governments have often neglected many branches of science, pure and applied. But they have not neglected the warlike aspects of science and they have taken full advantage of the latest scientific technique to arm and strengthen themselves. Most states rest in the final analysis on force, and scientific technique is making these governments so strong that they can tyrannise over people without, as a rule, any fear of consequences. The old days of popular risings against tyrannical governments

and the building of barricades and fights in the open streets, such as occurred in the great French Revolution, are long past. It is impossible now for an unarmed or even armed crowd to fight with an organised and well-equipped state force. The state army itself may turn against the government, as happened in the Russian Revolution, but, unless this happens, it cannot be forcibly defeated. Hence the necessity has arisen for people, struggling for freedom, to seek other and more peaceful methods of mass action.

Science thus leads to groups or oligarchies controlling States and to the destruction of individual liberty and the old nineteenth century ideas of democracy. Such oligarchies arise in different states, sometimes outwardly paying homage to the principles of democracy, at other times openly condemning them. These different state oligarchies come into conflict with each other and nations go to war. Such a big war to-day or in the future may well destroy not only these oligarchies but civilization itself. Or it may be that out of its ashes an international workers' state might arise as expected by the Marxist philosophy.

War is not a pleasant subject to contemplate in all its horrid reality, and because of this the reality is hidden behind fine phrases and brave music and bright uniforms. But it is necessary to know something of what war means to-day. The last war—the World War—brought home to many the horror of war. And yet, it is said, that the last war was nothing compared to what the next one is likely to be. For if industrial technique has advanced tenfold during the last few years, the science of war has advanced a hundred fold. War is no longer an affair of infantry charges and cavalry dashes; the old foot-soldier and cavalry man are almost as useless now in war as the bow and arrow. War to-day is an affair of mechanised tanks (a kind of moving battleship on caterpillar wheels), aeroplanes and bombs, and especially the latter two.

Aeroplanes are increasing in speed and efficiency

from day to day. The latest invention is by a Spaniard, Senor de la Cierva, and is called the 'Autogiro'. This rises up almost vertically and therefore no aerodromes or the like are necessary for it. It can go fast or very slowly and it can hover.

If war breaks out, it is expected that the warring nations will immediately be attacked by hostile aircraft. These aeroplanes will come almost within a few hours of the declaration of war, or they may even come before to steal an advantage over the enemy, and hurl high explosive bombs at the great cities and factories. There will be practically no defence possible against them. Some of the enemy aeroplanes might be destroyed but the remaining ones will be quite enough to destroy the city. Poison gases will come out of the bombs thrown from aeroplanes, and these will spread and envelop whole areas, suffocating and killing every living thing within their reach. It will be a large-scale destruction of the civilian population in the cruellest and most painful way, causing intolerable suffering and mental distress. And this kind of thing might be done simultaneously in the great cities of the rival powers at war with each other. In a European war, like the last, London, Paris, Berlin might be a heap of smouldering ruins within a few days or weeks.

There is worse to come. The bombs thrown from the aeroplanes might contain germs and bacteria of various horrible diseases so that a whole city might be infected with these diseases. This kind of 'bacteriological warfare' can be carried on in other ways also: by infecting food, drinking water and by animal carriers, for instance a rat which carries plague.

All this sounds monstrous and incredible, and so it is. Not even a monster would like to do it. But incredible things happen when people are thoroughly afraid and are fighting a life and death struggle. The very fear that the enemy country might adopt such unfair and monstrous methods, induces each country to be first in the field. For the weapons are so terrible

that the country that uses them first has a great advantage. Fear has big eyes!

Indeed, poison gas was used extensively during the last war, and it is well known that all the great powers have not got large factories to manufacture this gas for war purposes. A curious result of all this is that the real fighting in the next big war will take place not at the front, where some armies might dig themselves in and face each other, but behind the fronts, in the cities and homes of the civilian population. It may even be that the safest place during the war will be the front, for the troops will be fully protected there from air attacks and poison gases and infection! There will be no such protection for the men left behind, or the women, or the children.

What will be the result of all this? Universal destruction? The end of the fine structure of culture and civilization that centuries of effort have built up?

What will happen no one knows. We cannot tear the veil from the future. We see two processes going on to-day in the world, two rival and contradictory processes. One is the progress of co-operation and reason, and the building up of the structure of civilization; the other a destructive process, a tearing up of everything, an attempt by mankind to commit suicide. And both go faster and faster, and both arm themselves with the weapons and technique of science. Which will win?

THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND WORLD CRISIS

July 19, 1933

The more one thinks of the powers that science has placed at the disposal of man, and the use that man is putting them to, the more one wonders. For the plight of a capitalist world to-day is indeed an astonishing one. By means of the radio, science carries our voices to distant lands, by wireless telephone we speak to people at the other ends of the earth, and soon we shall be able to see them by means of the 'television'. By its wonderful technique science can produce all that mankind needs in abundance and rid the world for ever of the ancient curse of poverty. From the earliest days in the dawn of history, men had tried to find some relief from their daily toil, which crushed them with little return, in dreams of an El Dorado, a land flowing with milk and honey and with every kind of plenty. They had imagined a golden age that was past, a *Satya Yuga*, and they had fancied a paradise to come where they would at last have peace and joy. And then came science and placed the means of creating plenty at their disposal, and yet in the midst of this actual and possible plenty, the majority of mankind still lived in misery and destitution. Is this not an amazing paradox?

Our present day society is actually embarrassed by science and its abundant gifts. They do not fit in with each other; there is conflict between the capitalist form of society and the latest scientific technique and methods of production. Society has learnt how to produce but not how to distribute what it has produced.

After this little preamble (with a moral!) let us

have a look at Europe and America again. I have told you something already of their troubles and difficulties during the first ten years after the World War. The defeated countries—Germany and the small countries of central Europe—were very badly hit by the post-war conditions and their currencies collapsed, ruining their middle classes. The victor and creditor powers of Europe were only little better off. Each of them owed money to America and had a tremendous internal national war debt, and the burden of these two debts made them stumble and stagger. They lived in the hope of getting money from Germany as Reparations and using this for payment of their foreign debts at least. This hope was not a very reasonable one for Germany was not even a solvent country. But the difficulty was got over by America lending money to Germany, who then paid England, France, etc., their share of the Reparations, who then paid America part of their debts.

The United States was the only country, during this decade, that was prosperous. It seemed to be overflowing with money, and this very prosperity led to extravagant hopes and gambling in securities and shares.

The general impression in the capitalist world was that the economic crisis would pass as previous slumps had done, and that the world would gradually settle down to another period of prosperity. Indeed the life of capitalism seems to be an alternation of prosperity and crisis. Marx had pointed this out long ago in his *Capital* and had shown that this was in the very nature of the unplanned and unscientific methods of capitalism. Prosperity in industry led to a boom period and then everybody wanted to produce as much as possible to take advantage of this. The result was that there was over-production, that is, more was produced than could be sold. Stocks mounted up, there was a crisis and industry slowed down again. After a period of stagnation, during which the accumulated stocks were

gradually disposed of, industry woke up again and soon there was another period of prosperity. This was the usual cycle, and most people hoped that some time or other prosperity was bound to come.

In 1929, however, came a sudden change for the worse. America stopped lending money to Germany and the South American States, and thus put an end to the paper structure of loans and debt payments. It was obvious that the American capitalists would not go on lending money for ever for this only increased their debtors' liabilities and made it impossible for the debts ever to be paid. They had only lent money so far because of the abundance of cash with them for which they had no use. This superfluity of spare money also led them to tremendous speculation in the stock exchange. There was a regular gambling fever and everyone wanted to get rich quick.

The stoppage of lending to Germany immediately brought on a crisis and some German banks failed. Gradually the circle of payments of Reparations and debts stopped. Many of the South American governments and other small States began to default. President Hoover of the United States, observing with alarm that the whole structure of credit was collapsing, declared a year's moratorium in July, 1931. This meant that all inter-government debt and Reparation payments were to cease for a year to give relief to all the debtors.

Meanwhile, in October, 1929, a striking event had taken place in America. The gambling on the stock exchange led to ridiculously high prices of shares, etc., and then to sudden collapse. There was a great crisis in financial circles in New York and from that day America's period of prosperity ended. The United States lived up with the other nations who were suffering from bad trade. The depression of trade and industry now became the Great Depression which spread all over the world. Do not think that the Stock exchange gambling or financial crisis in New York

brought on the fall of America or the depression. That was just the last straw on the camel's back. The real reasons went far deeper.

Trade began to shrink all over the world and prices, especially of agricultural produce, to fall rapidly. There was said to be over-production of almost everything, which really means that people had no money to buy the goods produced; there was under-consumption. As manufactured articles could not be sold, they accumulated, and, naturally, the factories making them had to be closed. They could not go on making things which could not sell. This led to a great and unprecedented growth in unemployment in Europe and America and elsewhere. All industrial countries were hard hit. So also were agricultural countries which supplied food-stuffs or raw materials for industries to the world market. Thus India's industries suffered to some extent, but for greater suffering was caused to the agricultural classes by the fall in prices. Ordinarily such a fall in price of food-stuffs would have been a great boon to the people for they could get their food cheap. But this is a topsy turvy world under the capitalist system and this boon turned out to be a scourge. The peasantry had to pay their rent to their landlord or revenue to the government in cash, and to get this cash they had to sell their produce. Prices were so extraordinarily low that they could not raise enough money sometimes even by selling all the stuff they had produced. And often they were turned out of their lands and their mud huts and even their few household goods were auctioned to provide the rent. And in this way even when food was very cheap, they, who had produced it, starved and were made homeless.

The very inter-dependence of the world made this depression world-wide. Only a place like Tibet, cut off from the outside world was, I suppose, free from it. Month by month the depression spread and trade declined. It was like paralysis creeping along and incapacitating the whole social structure. For four years

this has gone on now and, apart from temporary local improvements, the decline has continued. Perhaps the best way to form an idea of this decline is to examine the actual trade figures for the last four years. The League of Nations has published the following figures for world trade. The figures represent millions of gold dollars and they are for the first three months of each year:

<i>First quarter of</i>	<i>Imports value</i>	<i>Exports value</i>	<i>Imports & Exports value</i>
1929	7972	7317	15289
1930	7364	6520	13884
1931	5154	4531	9685
1932	3434	3027	6461
1933	2829	2552	5381

These figures show us how world trade has progressively declined and in the first quarter of this year was 35 per cent. or about one-third of what it was four years earlier. And this decline still continues and it seems as if the whole of the capitalist social structure was collapsing without hope of recovery.

What do these abstruse figures about trade tell us in human terms? They tell us that the mass of the people are so poor that they cannot buy what they produce. They tell us that vast numbers of workers are unemployed and, with the best will in the world, cannot find work. In Europe and the United States alone there are thirty million unemployed workers, Britain having as many as three millions and the United States thirteen millions. Nobody knows how many unemployed there are in India or in other countries of Asia. Probably in India alone they far exceed the total for Europe and America. Think of the vast numbers of these unemployed all over the world, and their family members who depend upon them, and then you will have some idea of the human suffering caused by the trade depression. In many European countries a system of State insurance gives a subsistence allowance to all the registered unemployed; in the United States charity

is doled out to them.

These allowances and dole do not go far and many do not even get them. In some parts of central and eastern Europe conditions are terrible. Austria and Hungary are sick nations; it almost seems that their illness was a fatal one. Germany, spurred on by her misery, has just had an extraordinary counter-revolution. England, with a hundred and fifty years of imperial exploitation the world over to help her, is finding it difficult to carry on. She pays the insurance allowance to the unemployed and so manages to keep them quite, but the burden of this payment grows heavier to bear. Already it is calculated, that far more has been paid to her unemployed since the war than was spent on the war itself. Factories lie empty and unused all over the land. The great Lancashire cotton industry, which at one time supplied half the world with cotton goods, has shrunk to half its size, and its skilled workers sit idle waiting for better times which do not come. And behind these registered workers who get a meagre allowance from the State, there are large numbers who get nothing at all and who starve.

Of all the great industrial countries America was hit last by the depression but the reaction there was greater than elsewhere. The people of America were not used to long continuing trade depression and hardship. Proud, purse-proud America was stunned by the blow, and as the number of unemployed increased million after million, and hunger and slow starvation became a common sight, the morale of the nation cracked up. Confidence in banks and investments was shaken up, and money drawn out from banks and hoarded up. Banks exist on the basis of confidence and credit. If this confidence goes, so does the bank. In the United States, unlike England, there are a very large number of small banks, each carrying on independently of the others, and without branch banks in other towns. These small banks collapsed like nine-pins. During the last four years or so there have been about ten thousand

bank failures in the United States. Each such failure, of course, added to the crisis, frightened people all the more, and generally made matters worse.

America had no system of unemployment insurance as in Europe. At the same time Americans were not used to the ignoring of obvious starvation in their midst, as we are in India. Here in India it is nobody's concern if people starve, and millions do so. The process is as a rule gradual; when it becomes rapid and wide-spread, then it is called a famine and some feeble efforts are made to meet the situation. In America thousands of charity organisations as well as municipalities undertook the work of feeding the unemployed. This became a tremendous burden for them and reduced many municipalities to a state of bankruptcy. It managed to keep millions of the unemployed workers alive somehow, but the condition of these workers became progressively worse. And large numbers got no help at all and they wandered from town to town, walking along the high ways, asking passing motorists to give them a lift, and most often boarding slow goods train and hanging on to the foot boards. 'Hobos' such vagrants are called in America. For the first time in America, thousands of women were to be found among these wandering 'hobos', going from place to place in search of employment. More striking still were the numbers of young boys and girls and even children wandering alone or in small groups up and down the huge country. It has been estimated by the Children's Bureau of the United States that there were about two hundred thousand of such boys and girls under twenty-one on the move in America. This reminds one of the conditions that prevailed in Russia after the Civil War when the country was full of boy and girl vagrants.

Grown-up and able-bodied men sat idle, waiting and hoping for work, and model factories were closed up, and yet such is the nature of capitalism that at this very time dark and filthy sweat shops grew up and children of 12 to 16 were made to work there as much

as 10 or 12 hours a day for a small wage. Some employers took advantage of the tremendous pressure of unemployment on these young boys and girls and made them work hard and long in their mills and factories. The depression thus brought back child labour to America and labour laws prohibiting this as well as other abuses were openly flouted.

Remember that there was no lack of food or manufactured goods in America or in the rest of the world. The complaint was that there was too much, there was over-production. A well-known English economist, Sir Henry Strakosch, has stated that in July, 1931, that is, in the second year of the depression, there were, in the markets of the world, goods sufficient to maintain the people of the world on the standards to which they had been accustomed, for two years and three months following, supposing that not a stroke of work was done during this interval. This is a statement well worth pondering over. And yet, during this very period, there has been privation and starvation on a scale that the modern industrial world has never seen. Side by side with this privation has also gone on an actual destruction of food-stuffs. Crops have not been gathered and have been allowed to rot in the fields, fruit is left on the trees, and many articles have actually been destroyed. To give you just one instance: From June, 1931 to February, 1933 over 14,000,000 bags of coffee were destroyed in Brazil. As each bag contains 132 pounds, over 1,848,000,000 pounds of coffee were thus destroyed! This was more than enough for the total population of the world, giving every person a pound to himself. And yet we know that millions of people who would welcome coffee cannot afford it.

Besides coffee, wheat has been destroyed and cotton, and so many other things. Steps have also been taken to lessen production—in future by restricting the sowing of cotton, rubber, tea, etc. All this destruction and restriction is done to raise prices of agricultural produce, so that a shortage might create a demand and

push prices up. For the farmer who sells them in the market this would no doubt be profitable but for the consumers? Truly, this world of ours under-production, prices are so high that most people cannot afford to buy and there is privation. If there is over-production prices fall so low that industry and agriculture cannot function, and there is unemployment, and how can the unemployed buy anything for he has no money to buy with! In either event, whether there is scarcity or abundance, the lot of the masses is in privation.

As I have said, there was no lack of goods in America or elsewhere during the depression. The farmers had agricultural produce which they could not dispose of, and the city people had manufactured goods which they could not sell. And yet each wanted the others goods! The process of exchange got stuck up because of the lack of money on either side. And then, in highly industrialised, advanced, capitalistic America many people took to the ancient method of barter, which had existed in the old days before money came into use. Hundreds of barter organisations developed in America. As the capitalistic system of exchange broke down for lack of money people began to do without money and to exchange goods and services. Exchange associations arose to help this barter by issuing certificates. An interesting instance of barter was that of a dairyman who gave milk, butter and eggs to a university in exchange for the education of his children.

Barter also developed to some extent in other countries. There were also many instances of barter between nations as the complicated system of international exchanges broke down. Thus England bartered coal for Scandinavian timber; Canada gave aluminium for Soviet oil; the United States bartered wheat for Brazilian coffee.

The farmers in America were hard hit by the slump and they could not pay back the money they had borrowed from banks on mortgages of their farms. The banks thereupon tried to realise the money by getting

the farms sold up. But the farmers would not allow this and they organised themselves in committees of action to prevent such sales. The result was that no one dared to bid for a farmer's property at such an auction and the banks were forced to agree to the farmers' terms. This farmers' revolt spread in the Middle West agricultural regions of America and "Farmers' Holidays" were organised, which meant a farmers' strike and refusal to supply food to the neighbouring cities. There was a "Milk strike" when large quantities of milk was deliberately thrown away to prevent it reaching the cities. As the crisis has developed, these old conservative farmers of America have become more aggressive and revolutionary in outlook. Their demands are an ending or indefinite postponement of all farm debts and drastic reduction of all taxes. Their slogans are: "Human Rights Are Above Legal And Property Rights", "Wives And Children Have The First Mortgage", and such others.

This American farmers' movement is interesting because it is purely native to the country and has no connection with socialism or communism. These farmers are the old American stock who have been the conservative back-bone of the country. Economic distress however is changing these middle-class farmers with property rights into peasants who are just tillers of the soil and who own little property, and with this change their mentality is also changing and becoming more revolutionary. The industrial working class is also changing because of the depression. The skilled workers had been so prosperous in past times that they were very unlike European workers; they were petty capitalists and more like the middle classes. That is the reason why the American working class movement was so backward and reactionary. Now they are becoming a real proletariat.

I have dealt at some length with conditions in the United States because America is in many ways a fascinating country. It is the most advanced of

capitalist countries and it has no such feudal roots in the past as Europe and Asia have. Changes there are thus apt to be rapid. Other countries are more used to privation for the masses; in America this was a new and staggering phenomena on such a big scale. You can judge of the state of other countries during the depression from what I have told you about America. Some were far worse, others were a little better. On the whole, agricultural and backward countries were not so badly hit as advanced industrial ones. Their very backwardness saved them to some extent. Their chief trouble was the collapse of agricultural prices which brought great hardship to the peasantry. Australia, which is mainly agricultural, could not pay its debts to the English banks and was on the verge of bankruptcy because of this fall in prices. To save herself she had to agree to hard conditions from the English bankers. In a depression the class which flourishes and dominates over others is the banker class.

In South America the stoppage of loans from the United States and the depression brought a crisis which upset most of the republican governments or rather the dictators that ruled there. There were revolutions all over the south, including the three leading countries—the A, B, C countries—Argentina, Brazil and Chile. These revolutions were, like all South American revolutions, palace affairs just changing dictators and governments at the top. The person or group that controls the army and police governs the country. All the South American governments are heavily in debt and most of them have defaulted.

WHAT CAUSED THE CRISIS

July 21, 1933

The great depression has held the world by the throat and has strangled or slowed up almost all activities. The wheels of industry have stopped running in many places; fields that used to produce food and other crops now lie fallow and untilled; rubber-trees ooze out rubber but there is none to collect it; hill-sides that were covered with well-looked-after tea bushes run wild now and there is no one to tend them. And those who used to do all this work have joined the great armies of the unemployed, and wait for work and employment that does not come, and meanwhile, helpless and almost hopeless, face hunger and privation. In many countries the number of suicides has greatly increased.

All industries, I have said, came under the shadow of the depression. But there was one that did not; this was the armaments industry which supplied arms and war material to the different national armies and navies and air services. This trade prospered and paid fat dividends to its share-holders. It was not affected by the depression for it trafficked in national rivalries and conflicts and these grew worse under the crisis.

One great area also escaped the direct effects of the depression—the Soviet Union. There was no unemployment there and work went on harder than ever under the Five Years' Plan. It was outside the area controlled by capitalism and its economy was different. But, as I have told you, it suffered indirectly from the depression because of the fall in prices of agricultural produce which it sold abroad.

What was the cause of this great depression, this

world crisis, which in its own way was as terrible almost as the World War itself? It is called the crisis of capitalism because the vast and intricate capitalist machine is breaking down under it. Why is capitalism collapsing in this way? And is it a temporary crisis which capitalism will survive, or is it rather the final death agony of this great system which has dominated the world for so long? Many such questions arise and they fascinate us for on their answer depends the future of humanity, and incidentally ourselves. During the last four years many devices have been adopted in different countries to meet the crisis but they have only made matters worse. Many tonics have been given to and, like all stimulants, they have only produced a temporary improvement and then greater depression. In December, 1932, the British government sent a note to the American government pleading to be let off the payment of their war debt. In this note they pointed out how the remedies that had been tried had aggravated the disease. "Everywhere", they said, "taxation has been ruthlessly increased and expenditure drastically curtailed, and yet the control restrictions intended to remedy the trouble have merely aggravated it." Further, they pointed out, that "this loss and suffering is not due to the niggardliness of Nature. The triumphs of physical science are growing and the vast potentialities of the production of real wealth remain unimpaired." The fault did not lie in nature but in man and the system he had created.

It is not easy to give a correct diagnosis of this disease of capitalism or to prescribe a remedy for it. Economists, who ought to know all about it, differ among themselves and suggest a variety of causes and remedies. The only people who are quite clear in their minds about it seem to be the Communists and socialists who find a justification for their views and theories in the breakdown of capitalism. Capitalist experts are frankly puzzled and perplexed. One of the greatest and ablest of British financiers, Montague Norman, who

is the governor of the Bank of England said a few months ago at a public function: "The economic problem is too great for me. The difficulties are so vast, so novel, precedents so lacking, that I approach the whole subject in ignorance and humility. It is too great for me. When it comes to the future I hope that we may see the light at the end of the tunnel which some are able already to point to us." But this light is, like the will-o'-the-wisp, a deceptive phantom, raising hopes in us only to disappoint. Meanwhile the world goes on sliding down and down to some catastrophe. A well-known British politician, Sir Auckland Geddes, has said that "Thinking people believe that the disintegration of society has begun. In Europe we know that an age is dying."

The Germans used to hold that the real cause of the crisis was Reparations; many others hold that the depression came because of all the war debts, between nations as well as within nations which have become too great a burden to be borne and are crushing all industry. Thus the war is made primarily responsible for the world's troubles. Some economists think that the real trouble lies in the strange behaviour of money and the great fall in prices which, in turn, caused by the scarcity of gold; gold having become scarce partly because enough is not produced from the mines for the world's needs, and more so because of the hoarding of gold by different governments. Yet others say that all troubles are due to economic nationalism, to tariffs and heavy duties which prevent international trade. Another suggested cause is the advance in technology or scientific technique which has reduced the number of workers required and thus increased unemployment.

Much may be said for all these and other suggestions, and it may be that all of them have contributed to the world's distemper. But it seems hardly right or reasonable to lay the blame for the crisis on any one of them or all of them. Indeed many of these so-called causes are the results of the crisis, though each one of

them has helped to aggravate it. The basic trouble must lie deeper. It is not due to defeat in war as the victors are themselves involved in it; it is not due to national poverty because the richest country in the world, America, is one of the worst sufferers. There can be no doubt that the World War has been a powerful factor in hastening the crisis both because of the great burden of debt and the manner of its distribution among the creditors. Also because the high prices of commodities during the war and some years after the war were artificial and there was bound to be a collapse. But let us look deeper.

Over-production it is said, is the trouble. This is a misleading word for there can be no over-production when millions suffer from lack of even absolutely necessary articles. Hundreds of millions of people in India have not got enough clothes to wear, and yet one hears of large stocks in Indian cloth mills and *khadi* stores, and of 'over-production' of cloth. The real explanation is that the people are much too poor to buy the cloth, not that they do not require it. It is lack of money among the masses. This lack of money does not mean that money has disappeared from the world. It means that the distribution of money among the world's people has changed and is continually changing, that is, there is inequality in the distribution of wealth. On the one side there is an excess of wealth and the owners of it do not know how to utilise all of it; they merely save it up and swell up their bank accounts. This money is not used for buying commodities in the market. On the other side there is a greater lack of wealth and even the commodities that are required cannot be bought for want of money.

This seems to be a roundabout way of saying that there are rich and poor; a very obvious fact that requires no argument. These rich and poor have existed all along from the beginning of history. Why then should they be made responsible for the present crisis? I think I have told you in some previous letter that the whole

tendency of the capitalist system is to aggravate inequalities in the distribution of wealth. Under feudal conditions the position was almost static or slowly changing; capitalism with the big machine and the world market was dynamic and swift changes took place as wealth was accumulated by individuals and groups. The growth of inequality in the distribution of wealth, added to some other factors, led to the new struggle between labour and capital in the industrial countries. The capitalists in these countries eased the tension by various concessions to labour—higher wages, better living conditions, etc.,—at the expense of the exploitation of colonial and backward areas. In this way the exploitation of Asia and Africa and South America and eastern Europe helped the industrial countries of western Europe and North America to accumulate wealth and pass on a bit of it to their workers. As new markets were discovered, new industries were developed or old industries grew. Imperialism took the form of an aggressive search for these markets and for raw materials and the rivalries of different industrial Powers brought them into conflict. When the whole world was practically under capitalist exploitation this process of spreading out came to an end and the conflicts of the Powers led to war.

I have already told you all this, but I am repeating it to help you to understand the present crisis. During this period of a developing capitalism and a growing imperialism there were many crises in the west due to too much saving on the one side and too little money to spend on the other. But these crises passed off because the spare money with the capitalists went to develop and exploit backward areas and thus created new markets there which increased consumption of goods. Imperialism was called the final phase of capitalism. Ordinarily this process of exploitation might have gone on till the whole world had been industrialised. But difficulties and checks arose. The chief difficulty was the fierce competition of the imperialist Powers, each wanting the biggest share for itself. Another was the

new nationalism in the colonial countries and the growth of colonial industries which began to supply their own markets.

All these processes, as we have seen, led to the war. But the war did not and could not solve the difficulties of capitalism. One huge area, the Soviet Union, went out of the capitalist world completely and ceased to be a market which could be exploited. In the east, nationalism grew more aggressive and industrialization spread. The tremendous advance in scientific technique during and after the war also helped in the unequal distribution of wealth and in creating unemployed. The war debts were also a powerful factor.

These war debts were enormous, and, it is worth remembering, they represented no solid wealth of any other kind. If a country borrows money to build a railway or irrigation works, or anything else beneficial for the country, it has got something solid in exchange for the money borrowed and spent. Indeed these works may actually produce more wealth than was spent on them; they are therefore called 'productive works'. The money borrowed in war time was not spent for any such purpose. It was not only unproductive but it was destructive. Vast amounts were spent and they left a trail of destruction behind. The war debts were thus a pure and unmitigated burden. There were three kinds of war debts: Reparations which the defeated countries were forced to agree to pay; inter-governmental debts which the allied countries owed to each other, and especially to America, and national debts which each country had borrowed from its own citizens.

Each of these three different kinds of debts was huge but the biggest of all for each country was its national debt. Thus the British national debt after the war amounted to the prodigious figure of £6,500,000,000. Even to pay interest on such debts was a great burden and meant very heavy taxation. Germany wiped off her big internal debt by the inflation which put an end

to the old mark, and so, in this respect, she escaped a burden at the cost of the people who had lent her money. France adopting the same method of inflation, but not to the same extent, reduced the value of her franc to almost a fifth of what it was, and thus at one stroke reduced her internal national debt to one-fifth also. It was not possible to play this game with the debts owing to other countries (the Reparations or Inter-governmental debts) which had to be paid in solid gold.

The payment of these inter-governmental debts by one country to another meant that the paying country lost so much money and became poorer. But the re-payment of the internal national debt did not make any such difference to the country, as the money remained in the country anyhow. And yet it made a big difference. Such debts were paid by raising money by taxation from all the tax-payers in the country, rich and poor. The bond-holders who had lent money to the State were the rich. So that the result was that the rich and poor were both taxed to pay the rich; the rich got back what they paid in taxation to the State and much more; the poor paid but did not get back anything. The rich became richer and the poor poorer.

If the European debtor countries paid up some of their debts to America, all this money went to the big bankers and financiers there. Thus the war debts resulted in aggravating an already bad situation and in over-burdening the rich people with money at the cost of the poor. The rich wanted to invest this for no businessman likes to see his money idle. They over-invested this money in fresh factories and machinery and other capital expenditure, which was not justified by the impoverished state of the people generally. They also went in for speculation at the stock exchange. They prepared to produce goods on a bigger and bigger mass scale, but what was the good of it when the masses had no money to buy? So there was over-production and goods could not be sold and industries began losing

money and many of them shut up shop. Businessmen, frightened by their losses, stopped investing in industry and held on to their money, which lay idle in banks. And thus unemployment became general and the depression world-wide.

I have discussed the different suggested causes of the crisis separately but, of course, they all worked together and thus made the trade depression a greater one than any before. Essentially it was due to the unequal distribution of the surplus income produced by capitalism. To put it differently, the masses did not get enough money as wages and salaries to buy the goods they had produced by their work. The value of the products was greater than their total income. The money which, if it had been with the masses, would have gone to buy these goods, was concentrated in the hands of relatively few very rich persons who did not know what to do with it. It was this superfluous money that flowed out in loans from America to Germany and Central Europe and South America. It was this foreign lending that kept war-worn Europe and the capitalist machine functioning for some years, and was yet a cause of the crisis. And it was a stoppage of this foreign lending that finally brought the crash.

If this diagnosis of the crisis of capitalism is correct, then the remedy can only be one which equalizes incomes or at least tends in that direction. To do so fully would be to adopt socialism but capitalists are not likely to do that till circumstances compel them. People talk of a planned capitalism, of international combines to exploit backward areas, but behind this talk national rivalries and the struggle of imperialist powers for world markets grows fierce. Planning for what? For profiting one at the expense of another? The motive of capitalism is individual profit, and competition has been its watchword, and competition and planning go ill together.

Even apart from socialists and communists, many thinking people have begun to question the efficacy of capitalism under present conditions. Startling remedies

have been suggested by some to do away not only with the present profit system, but also the price system itself, under which one pays for goods with money. A group of engineer-economists in America, styling themselves the 'Technocrats', propose that instead of money we should use the 'erg', a unit of energy. Another suggestion is that the unit should be the 'ern', which is supposed to be the erg, the energy unit, plus N which represents nitrogen. I am not going to try to explain how these are supposed to work. I mention them to make you realise how peoples' minds are getting out of the old grooves. Yet another proposal (called the Douglas theory of Social Credit) would do away with wages and salaries completely as an absolute survival of old times. The payment of these wages and salaries was the distribution of purchasing power to the people. This does not work now as most of the purchasing power goes to a few people. Major Douglas, therefore, suggests that instead of wages and salaries, the State should issue annual national dividends to all its citizens of the total value of the yearly net increase in the real wealth of the country. In this way all the citizens can purchase all the consumption goods (that is goods that can be consumed, not capital goods like railways or factories) which the community as a whole produces during the year. There will thus be "Dividends for all", it is said, and, of course, there can be no over-production under this system, as the consuming power and producing power are evenly balanced. The system is based on an expansion of credit to all the citizens.

All these proposals are in the air and are much too revolutionary for the capitalists to adopt them. The I. L. O. (International Labour Office) of Geneva recently made a simple proposal to reduce unemployment immediately by limiting the workers' hours of work to forty per week. This would have resulted in millions of more workers being engaged and thus reducing employment to that extent. All the representatives of workers welcomed this but the British government

opposed it, and with the help of Germany and Japan managed to get the proposal shelved. Britain's record in the I. L. O. has been a consistently reactionary one during all this post-war period.

The crisis and depression are world wide and one would imagine that the remedy must also be an international world remedy. Attempts have been made by different countries to find some way of co-operation but they have all failed so far. And so each country, despairing of a world solution, has sought a national remedy in economic nationalism. If world trade is shrinking away, it has been argued, let us at least keep our own country's trade to ourselves and prevent foreign goods from coming. Export trade being doubtful and variable each country has tried to concentrate on the home market. Tariffs have been put on or raised to keep out foreign goods and they have succeeded in doing so. They have also succeeded in injuring international trade for every country's tariff was a barrier to world trade. Europe and America and, to some extent, Asia are full of these high tariff walls. Another result of the tariffs was the increased cost of living, for the prices of food stuffs and everything that was protected by the tariff went up. A tariff creates a national monopoly and prevents, or makes more difficult, competition from outside. Under a monopoly prices are bound to rise. The particular industry protected by the tariff may benefit, or rather its owners may benefit, by the protection given to it, but this is largely at the cost of the people who buy the goods as they have to pay higher prices. Tariffs thus bring some relief to certain classes and they create vested interests for the industries profiting by the tariffs want to keep them. Thus in India the cloth industry is protected very heavily against Japan. This is very profitable to the Indian mill owners who could not otherwise compete with Japan and who can thus charge higher prices. The sugar industry is also protected here with the result that large numbers of sugar mills are cropping up all over India and

especially in the United Provinces and Behar. A vested interest is thus created and if the sugar duties were removed this interest would suffer and the new sugar mills perhaps collapse.

Two kinds of monopolies increased: external monopolies as between nations helped by tariff, and internal monopolies, large concerns swallowing up smaller ones. Of course the growth of monopolies was no new process. It has been taking place for many years past, even before the World War. This became swifter now. Tariffs also had been functioning in many countries. England was the one big country that had so far relied on free trade and done without tariffs. But now it had to break its old tradition and fell in line with other countries by imposing tariff duties. They brought some immediate relief to some of her industries.

All this, though it brought local and temporary relief, really made matters worse in the world as a whole. Not only did it further lessen international trade, but it maintained and increased the unequal distribution of wealth. It led to continuous friction between rival nations each raising its tariffs against the other—tariff wars, as they are called. As the world markets became fewer and more and more protected the struggle for them grew harder, and employers began to press for wage cuts for their workers, so that they might be able to compete with other countries. And so the depression grew and the ranks of the unemployed swelled. Every wage cut reduced the purchasing power of the workers.

THE STRUGGLE OF AMERICA AND ENGLAND FOR LEADERSHIP

July 25, 1933

I have told you of the shrinkage of international trade during the present depression till only a third of it has remained. Domestic trade also lessened because of the decreasing buying power of the people. Unemployment went on increasing and the support of these millions of unemployed workers became a great burden on the various governments. In spite of high taxes many governments found it almost impossible to make both ends meet; their revenue went down, their expenditure, in spite of economy and salary cuts, remained high. For the greater part of this expenditure was tied up with armies and navies and the air force, and with the payment of debts, internal as well as external. There were deficits in the national budgets, that is, expenditure exceeded income. These deficits, which could only be made good by borrowing more money or diverting money from other reserve funds, weakened the financial position of the countries concerned.

At the same time large stocks of goods remained unsold because people did not have enough money to buy them, and, in many instances, these 'superfluous' food-stuffs and other articles were actually destroyed, though people elsewhere were in sore need of them. The crisis and collapse were world wide (excluding the Soviet Union) and yet the different nations have so far failed to co-operate internationally to end them. Each country has shifted for itself, has tried to overreach the others, and even attempted to profit by another's misfortune. This individual and selfish action as well

as the other partial remedies tried have only aggravated the situation. Quite apart from this trade depression, but influencing it considerably are two dominant facts or tendencies in world affairs. One is the rivalry of the capitalist world with the Soviet Union; the other is Anglo-American rivalry.

The capitalist crisis has weakened and impoverished all the capitalist countries and, in a sense, has lessened the chances of war. Each country is busy in putting its own house in order, and has no money for adventures. And yet, paradoxically, this very crisis has increased the war danger, for it is making nations and their governments desperate, and desperate people often seek a solution for their internal difficulties in war abroad. This is especially so when a dictator or a small oligarchy is in power. Sooner than give up power he will plunge his country into war and thus divert his people's attention away from troubles at home. Thus a crusade against the Soviet Union and commission is always likely, as it might be hoped that this will bring many of the capitalist countries together. The Soviet Union, as I have told you, was not directly affected by the crisis of capitalism. Busy with its five year plans, it was intent on avoiding war at any cost.

Rivalry between England and America was inevitable after the war. They are the two greatest world Powers and each of them wants to dominate world affairs. England had unchallenged supremacy before the world war. The war made the United States the richest and most powerful nation, and naturally they wanted to take henceforth what they considered was their rightful position in the world, that is the leading place. They were not going to permit England to boss everything in future. England herself fully realised that times had changed and she tried to adopt herself to them by seeking the friendship of America. She even went to the length of giving up her Japanese Alliance to please America and made other soothing advances. But England was not prepared to give up

her special interests and position, and especially her financial leadership, as her greatness and empire were bound up with these. And it was precisely this financial leadership that America wanted. Friction between the two countries was inevitable. Behind soft-words and pleasant phrases, the bankers of the two countries, backed by their governments, fought for this great prize, the world leadership in finance and industry. In this game America seemed to have most of the winning cards and trumps, but long experience and good play was more on the side of England.

The war debts added to the bitterness between the two Powers and Americans were cursed in England for being Shylocks after their pound of flesh. As a matter of fact the American debt was due by the British government to private bankers who had lent the money, or advanced credit, during wartime. The United government had merely guaranteed it. It was thus not a question of the U. S. government wiping off the debt. If England was excused or let off from paying it, the U. S. government, who were the guarantors, would have to pay it. The American Congress saw no reason why they should undertake this additional liability, especially in time of crisis.

Thus the economic interests of England and America pulled different ways, and the pull of economic interest is stronger than any other pull. There is so much in common between the two peoples and yet there is talk now of the possibility of future war between them. In such a war it is hardly conceivable that England can win, for the strength and resources of America are far greater. And yet the alternative to such a struggle seems to be a gradual but continuous transfer of England's special privileges and dominating position to the United States. To give up a great deal that they value, to lose their ancient prestige as well as the profits of imperial exploitation, to take a back place in the world, dependent on the good-will of America, is no pleasant thought to Englishmen, and they are not

likely to submit without a struggle. This is the tragedy of England's present position. All sources of old strength are drying up and the future seems to point inevitably to decline. But used to dominion for generations, the English people are not prepared to accept this fate, and they are fighting, and will fight, bravely against it.

I have pointed out to you two dominant rivalries in the world to-day, as they go to explain much that happens. There are of course ever so many rivalries; the whole capitalist system is based on competition and rivalry.

To go back to our account of the progress of events under the depression. The Rhineland was evacuated by the French in June, 1930, much to the relief of Germans. But it had come too late to be accepted as a sign of good-will and the shadow of the depression darkened everything. As trade conditions worsened money became scarcer with the debtors, and the payment of reparations and debts more difficult, or even impossible. To get over the difficulty of paying, President Hoover had declared a moratorium for a year. Attempts were made to get the whole question of war debts reviewed but the United States Congress refused to reconsider it. The French government were equally hard on the question of reparations from Germany. The British government, being both creditor and debtor, were in favour of wiping off both reparations and debts, and having a clean state. Each country thought in its own terms, with the result that there was no common action. About the middle of 1931 there was a financial collapse in Germany and bank failures. This led to crisis in England which could not meet its liabilities. The country was on the verge of financial collapse also. Under threat of this the Labour government was turned out by its own chief MacDonald, who now appeared as the head of a 'National Government', which was dominated by conservatives. But even this National Government could not save the pound. About that time there was

also a mutiny of the British sailors of the Atlantic Fleet on the question of wage cuts. This peaceful mutiny had a tremendous effect on Britain and Europe. Memories of the Russian Revolution and the mutinies of the sailors there came to peoples' minds and put the fear of a coming Bolshevism in them. The British capitalists decided to save their capital before any disaster came, and sent it in large quantities to foreign countries. Patriotism among wealthy people does not apparently stand the strain of a risk to money.

As British capital went abroad, the pound fell lower and at last on September 23, 1931, England had to abandon the gold standard, that is in order to save her gold, to separate the pound from gold. Henceforth no one who had pounds sterling could claim to be paid in gold, as he could before.

This degradation of the pound was a tremendous event from the point of view of the British Empire and England's world position. It meant the abandonment, at least for the time being, of the financial leadership which had made London the centre and capital of the world in money matters. To preserve this England had reverted to the gold standard in 1925 even at cost of loss to her industry, and had faced unemployment, coal strike, etc. But all this had been of no avail, and the pound was forced away from gold by the actions of other countries. This seemed to mark the beginning of the end of the British Empire and so it was interpreted the world over. The date, September 23, 1931, became quite important as fixing this historic event.

But England was a tough fighter and had still a dependent and helpless empire to draw upon. She recovered from the crisis largely by drawing out gold from India and Egypt, two countries under her full control. Her industries benefited by the fall of the pound as she could sell her goods cheaper abroad. It was a remarkable recovery.

The question of reparations and war debts still remained. It was obvious that Germany could not pay

reparations and indeed she formally refused to do so. At last, at a conference held in Lausanne in 1932, reparations were reduced to a nominal figure in the hope and expectation that the United States would reduce debts similarly also. But the U. S. government refused to mix up debts with reparations or to write off the former. This upset the apple cart again and people in Europe were very angry with America.

The time for payment of the instalments due to the United States came in December, 1932, and America insisted on them despite eloquent pleading on behalf of England, France, etc. After a great deal of argument, England paid up but said it was for the last time. France and some other countries refused to pay and defaulted. No fresh settlement followed this and last month, in June, 1933, the payment of the next instalment of the debt became due. France again refused to pay; America was however generous to England and accepted a token payment of a small sum, leaving the larger question to be decided later. What that decision will be I do not know; but it is clear enough that the great part of the debts will never be paid. Circumstances have taken matters in hand and wiped them out. Probably the United States are resigned to this, but they want to extort some privileges or benefits in exchange for giving up the debts.

In this connection, when great and rich capitalist Powers like England and France are trying to get out of the debts they owe, according to their own standards and system, it is interesting to think of the Soviet repudiation of debts which has been so strongly condemned by them. In India also a cry of pious horror goes up from government circles when it is suggested, as has been done on behalf of the Congress, that our impartial tribunal should consider the whole question of India's debt to England. A similar question of the payment of a nation's liabilities, has led to serious friction between Ireland and England, and to a trade war between them which is still going on.

I have repeatedly referred above to England's financial leadership and America's fight for it, and to banking crises, and to the collapse financially of various countries. What does all this jargon mean, you may well ask, for I doubt if you understand it. Perhaps the subject does not interest you. But now that I have said so much about it, I feel I ought to try to explain it more fully. Whether we are interested or not, we are vastly influenced, both nationally and individually, by these financial happenings, and it is as well to understand something that moulds our present and future. Many people look upon the financial system of the capitalist world with awe and reverence, so impressed are they by its mysterious workings. It seems to them too intricate and delicate and complicated for them even to try to understand it, and so they leave it to experts and bankers and the like. It is undoubtedly intricate and complicated, and to be complicated is not necessarily a virtue in anything, but still we must have some idea of it if we are to understand our present world. I am not going to try to explain the whole system to you. That is more than I can do for I am no expert at it and am just a learner. I shall just tell you a few facts which I hope will help you to follow intelligently some of the world happenings and the news that we see in the papers. In doing so I am going to rely upon a very clear account given by an able French economist, Francis Delaisi. Frenchmen are delightfully clear-headed and mentally keen and alert unlike Englishmen who pride themselves on their 'muddling through' and want of logic. I shall probably have to repeat much that I have already said but you will not mind that if it helps to make you understand. Remember that this is the capitalist system with its private companies with shares, its private banks, and stock exchanges where shares are bought and sold. In the Soviet Union the financial and industrial system is quite different. There are no such companies, or private banks or stock exchanges there; almost everything is owned and controlled by the State, and foreign trade is

essentially barter.

You know that within each country business is carried on almost entirely by means of cheques and, to a lesser extent, bank notes; gold and silver are seldom used except for petty purchases (gold indeed is hardly obtainable). This paper money represents credit and it serves the purpose of hard cash so long as people have confidence in the banks or the country's government issuing the currency notes. But this paper money is no good in making payments from one country to another as each country has its own national currency. The basis of international payments is therefore gold which has an intrinsic value as a rare metal, either gold coins or uncoined gold (bullion it is called in the mass) being used. But if the actual gold had to be used for every payment from one country to another it would be a tremendous nuisance and international trade could hardly develop. Besides, the amount of actual gold available in the world would limit the amount or value of international trade, for when this limit was reached, there being no more gold available for payments, no further foreign trade transactions could take place till some of the gold was released and brought back.

But this is not so. In 1929 the total gold money in the world was eleven billion dollars (11,000,000,000). In the same year the total value of goods sent from one country to another was thirty-two billion dollars; there were also foreign loans amounting to four billions; and other foreign payments like tourist expenditure, freight charges, money sent home by emigrants, etc., also amounting to about four billions. Thus the total international payments amounted to about forty billion dollars, which is nearly four times the total amount of gold money.

How were foreign payments made then? Obviously all of them could not be made in gold. Usually they were made in a kind of auxiliary money, or credit papers like cheques or bills of exchange which merchants sent abroad in acknowledgment of their debts. This

business was done through the medium of banks doing exchange business. The exchange bank would be in touch with buyers and sellers in different countries and would adjust its payments and receipts through the bills of exchange received by it. If the bank ran short of bills of exchange at any moment it could make payments by means of well-known securities such as government bonds or loans or shares in international companies. These shares could be sold or transferred by a telegraphic message, and so payment could be made at the other end immediately.

Thus actual payments in international trade are made through the medium of the central exchange banks by means of commercial paper (bills of exchange, etc.) and financial paper (securities, etc.). These banks must keep a big supply of both these kinds of paper, bills of exchange and securities, to meet the day to day needs of business. They publish weekly lists showing how much gold and such foreign paper they have got. Ordinarily gold will never be sent abroad for payment abroad. But whenever it so happens that it is actually cheaper to send gold abroad than to make payment in any other way, then the banker will send gold metal.

In the gold standard countries the value of the national currency was fixed in terms of gold and anyone could demand payment in gold. These currencies therefore were practically fixed and interchangeable as they could be converted into gold. The only possible variation was the cost of sending the gold metal from one country to another, for if the price in his own country was higher a businessman could easily get the gold from another country. This was the gold standard system. Under this system different national currencies were stable and international trade grew up in the nineteenth century, right upto the World War. This system has broken down to-day and, in consequence, money has behaved strangely, and most national currencies are unstable.

The exports of a country roughly balance its

imports. In other words a country pays for the goods it receives by the goods it sends abroad. But this is not quite true and often there is a small balance either way, when the imports are greater in value than the exports, this is called an 'advance balance', and the country has to make an extra payment to settle accounts.

The stream of goods moving between the different countries is by no means a regular one. It changes frequently and there are ups and downs, and as this varies the demand for and supply of bills of exchange also vary. It often happens that a country has plenty of bills of exchange of a kind that it does not need at the time and not enough of another kind that it needs. Thus France may have more than enough bills of exchange in German marks on Germany but not enough to settled accounts in dollars with America. France would then want to sell the former and buy instead bills in dollars on the United States. To be able to do this there must be a central market for bills of exchange where these international exchanges can take place. Such a market can only exist in a country which has three qualifications:

1. Its foreign trade must be wide-spread and of a varied kind so that it has an abundant supply of bills of exchange of all kinds.
2. Securities of every kind must be available there, that is, it must be the greatest market for capital.
3. It must also be the greatest market for gold, so that in case both bills of exchange and securities are lacking gold may be easily procurable.

Right through the nineteenth century England was the only country which satisfied those three conditions. Being first in the field in industry and having a large empire as a monopoly area, it developed the biggest volume of foreign trade in the world. To its growing industry it sacrificed its agriculture. Its ships carried merchandise and bills of exchange from every port. Because of this great industrial development, it naturally became the greatest market for capital and accumulated all kinds of foreign securities. Another factor that

helped it was the presence of two-thirds of the gold supply of the world within the British Empire—in South Africa, Australia, Canada and India. These gold mines found a ready market in London where the Bank of England bought all the gold they produced at a fixed price.

Thus the city of London became the central market for bills of exchange, securities and gold. It became the financial capital of the world, and every government or banker, who wanted to settle an account abroad and could not find the means to do so in his own country, came to London where he found every kind of commercial and financial paper as well as gold. The pound sterling became the solid symbol of commerce. If Denmark or Sweden wanted to buy something from South America, the contract was made out in pounds sterling although the goods never came to London.

This was a tremendously profitable business for England for the whole world paid some tribute to her for this service. There were the direct profits; and then foreign business houses kept balances or receipts in deposit in English banks with a view to future payments. These deposits were profitably lent out by these banks to other clients for short periods. The English banks also got to know all about the business of foreign industrialists. From the bills of exchange that passed through their hands they found out the prices charged by German or other foreign businessmen, and even the names of their clients in foreign countries. This information was very useful to British industry for it enabled it to cut out its foreign competitors.

To increase and strengthen this international business English banks opened branches and agencies all over the world. Apart from helping to bring foreign countries under the influence of British industry, these banks performed another very useful service from the British point of view. They made enquiries and kept records about all the well-known local firms and business. So that when such a local firm issued a bill of

exchange, the British bank or agent on the spot knew the worth of this bill, and could guarantee it if he thought it safe. This was called 'accepting' it as the bank wrote 'accepted' on it. As soon as the bank assured responsibility for it, the bill could easily be sold or transferred as it had the bank's reputation behind it. Without such a guarantee or acceptance the bill of exchange of an unknown foreign firm would not find any buyers in a distant market like London or elsewhere, as no one would know the firm. The bank accepting the bill took a risk in doing so but they did so after full enquiry through their branch offices on the spot. In this way this system of 'acceptances' helped to facilitate the transfer of bills of exchange and business generally, and at the same time tightened the grip of the City of London on world trade. No other country was in a position to do this acceptance work on a large enough scale as it had few branches abroad.

Thus, for over a hundred years, London was the financial and economic capital of the world, and all the strings of international finance and trade passed through her hands. Money was abundant there, and, because of this, could be had on cheaper terms. This attracted all bankers there. To the Governor of the Bank of England came all the information about trade and finance from the four corners of the world, and, by a glance at his books and papers, he could tell what the economic condition of any country was. Indeed, he sometimes knew more about it than the government of that country. And by little dodges of buying or selling securities in which a foreign government was interested, or by the way short-term loans were given, pressure could be brought to bear on the political policy of this foreign government. High Finance, as this was called, was, and still is, one of the most effective of the methods of coercion of the imperialist Powers.

Such was the state of affairs before the World War. The City of London was the seat and symbol of the power and prosperity of the British Empire. The war

brought many changes and upset the old order. It brought a great victory but a victory which cost London and England dear.

What happened after the war I shall tell you in my next letter.

THE DOLLAR, THE POUND, AND THE RUPEE

July 27, 1933

The World War cut up the world into three parts, the two warring parts and the neutral countries. No trade or other contacts were left between the rival warring areas, except the secret traffic of spying on each other. International trade was of course wholly upset. Owing to command of the seas the Anglo-French and allies could carry on some trade with neutral countries and colonies but even this was greatly restricted by the German submarine campaign.

All the resources of the warring countries went into the war and huge sums were spent. For nearly a year and a half England and France financed their poorer allies, both of them borrowing money from their own people as well running up bills in America. Then France was exhausted and could not help others. England carried on the burden for another year and a quarter and in its turn became exhausted in March, 1917, when it was unable to meet a payment of fifty million pounds due to the United States. Fortunately for England and France and their allies, America entered the war on their side at this critical moment when no one else had any financial resources left. From then onwards till the end of the war the United States supplied the funds for the war to all their allies. They raised prodigious sums from their own people in 'Liberty' and 'Victory' loans, and spent lavishly themselves and lent them to the Allies. The result was, as I have told you, that when the war ended, the United States were the world's money-lenders to whom all the nations owed

money. When the war began the American government owed Europe five billion dollars; when the war ended Europe owed America ten billion dollars.

This was not the only financial gain of America during the war. American foreign trade had grown at the expense of English and German trade and now equalled British trade. The United States had also accumulated two-thirds of the world's gold, and an enormous amount of foreign government stocks and bonds.

The United States were thus in an overpowering financial position. They could reduce any of their debtor countries to bankruptcy by simply demanding payment of their debts. It was natural therefore that they should envy London's old position of financial world capital and desire it for themselves. They wanted New York, the richest city in the world, to take the place of London. Thus began a fierce struggle between the bankers and financiers of New York and London, backed by their governments.

Pressure from America shook the English pound. The bank of England was unable to deliver gold on its currency and the pound sterling (which was thus off the gold standard) began to vary and fall. The French franc also fell. In an unstable world only the American dollar seemed to be firm as a rock.

One would have thought that under these circumstances the money business and gold would have turned away from London and gone to New York. But, strange to say, this did not happen and foreign bills of exchange and the gold from the mines still went to London. This was not because people preferred the pound to the dollar but because dollars were not easily available.

You will remember my telling you of the system of 'acceptances' which the British banks worked all over the world through branches and agencies. The American banks had no such branches or foreign agencies and so they had no means at their disposal of getting the foreign bills of exchange by 'accepting' them, and naturally the

bills drifted to London through the British banks. Coming up against this difficulty, American bankers immediately set about opening branches and agencies in foreign countries, and fine buildings grew up in many places. But there was yet another difficulty. The work of 'acceptances' could only be done by a trained personnel who had full information about local conditions and local business. British banks had built up their service in a hundred years of growth and it was not easy to catch them up in this respect quickly.

Americans then combined with some French, Swiss and Dutch banks against London but with no great success. France although a very rich country exporting a great deal of capital abroad, had never paid attention to organising a traffic in foreign bills of exchange. So the tussle between the New York and the city of London went on, and on the whole the latter was not affected. In 1924 a new factor in favour of New York appeared. The German mark was stabilised after the great inflation was over, and German capital which had run away to Switzerland, and Holland during the inflation (capital always runs away in times of risk or danger!) returned to German banks. The addition of Germany now to the American financial *bloc* now made a great deal of difference to London. For now vast numbers of American bills of exchange could be exchanged for European bills of exchange without reference to London. And London has still an unstable currency, that is the pound had no fixed gold value; it was off the gold standard.

The financiers of the City of London were now alarmed. They saw all the good business in international exchange go over to New York and its European allies and London having only the leavings. The first thing to be done to prevent this happening was to fix up the pound again in relation to gold, that is to stabilize it. This would again attract good exchange business. So in 1925 the pound was stabilised at the old level. This was a great triumph for the English bankers

and creditors for a more valuable pound meant a bigger income for them. It was bad for English industry as it raised the prices of English goods abroad and industrialists found great difficulty in competing with America, Germany and other industrial countries on the foreign market. But England deliberately sacrificed to some extent her industry to her banking system, or rather to her financial supremacy in the world exchange market. The prestige of the pound went up, but you will remember that this was followed in England by domestic troubles due partly to the blow to industry. There was unemployment and the long drawn out coal strike and the general strike.

The pound was stabilised but this was not enough. The British government owed an enormous sum of money to America which was a floating debt and could be demanded back almost at any time. By making such a demand the United States could put England in a very difficult position and force the pound down again. So the leading British statesmen (among them Stanley Baldwin) rushed to New York to come to terms with America about the repayment of the war debt in instalments ('funding' this process is called). All the European countries were America's debtors and the proper course for them would have been to consult together and then approach the United States for as good terms as they could get. But the British government was so anxious to save the pound and keep London's financial leadership that they had no time to consult France or Italy and wanted some arrangement with America quickly and at any cost. They got the arrangement but at a heavy cost and they agreed to severe conditions laid down by the United States government. Subsequently France and Italy got far better terms from the United States for their debts.

These strenuous efforts and sacrifices saved the pound and the city of London but the struggle with New York continued in all the world markets. Having

an abundance of money, New York offered long-term loans at low interest, and many countries which used to borrow in the London money market (including Canada, South Africa and Australia) were thus enticed away to New York. London could not compete in these long-term loans with New York and it thereupon tried giving short-term loans to the banks of Central Europe. In short-term loans the banker's experience and prestige count for more and this was in favour of London. So London banks established close relations with Viennese banks and through them with the banks in Central and South Eastern Europe (the Danube and Balkan areas). New York also continued to do some business there.

This was a period of frenzied finance when, partly because of the competition of London and New York, money poured into Europe, and millionaires and multimillionaires cropped up with amazing rapidity. The way things were done was simple. Some enterprising person would get a concession in one of these countries to build railways or other public works, or a monopoly like that of the manufacture and sale of matches. A company would be formed to hold this concession or monopoly and this would issue stock or shares. On the basis of this stock or shares the big banks in New York or London would give advances. Financiers would thus borrow money in dollars in New York at two per cent. and then lend this in Berlin at six per cent. and in Vienna at eight per cent. By this clever shifting about of other people's money these financiers became very wealthy. One of the most famous of them was Ivar Krevgar, a Swede who was known as the Match King because of his monopolies of matches. Krengar had tremendous prestige at one time but it has now been proved that he was a thorough fraud and that he embezzled huge sums of money. He committed suicide a year or two ago when he was on the point of being found out. Several other famous financiers of the time have also got into trouble because of their shady

methods.

This Anglo-American competition in central and eastern Europe did one good. The money that was poured in contributed greatly to the revival of Europe during the years before the depression began in 1929.

Meanwhile France had had an inflation in 1926 and 1927, and the franc had fallen greatly in value. Frenchmen with money, and every French petty bourgeois has his savings, sent their money abroad for fear of losing it as the franc fell. They bought a vast quantity of foreign securities and foreign bills of exchange. In 1927 the franc was stabilised again and fixed up in relation to gold, but at about a fifth of its previous value. The French holders of foreign securities were now all keen on changing them for something in francs. They had done a good stroke of business for now they were getting five times as many francs as they possessed originally and thus they had not suffered at all from the inflation, which they would have done if they had stuck to francs right through. The French government decided to profit by the occasion and it bought up all such foreign bills of exchange or securities giving instead freshly printed bills in francs. Thus the French government suddenly became very wealthy in the possession of these foreign bills and securities, in fact, it was at the time the greatest possessor of them. It had no desire or sufficient qualification to become a competitor with England and America for financial leadership. But it was in a position to influence both.

The French are a cautious people and so is their government. They prefer small profits and safety to the chance of big profits with the risk of losing even what they have. So, cautiously, the French government lent out its superfluous money to good firms in London at a low rate of interest. Thus they would only charge the British bank two per cent. interest; the British would pass on the money at 5 or 6 per cent. to German banks, who in their turn would advance it to Vienna at 8 or 9 per cent., and finally the money might

reach Hungary or the Balkan at 12 per cent! The rate of interest increased with the risk, but the Bank of France preferred to face no risk and to deal with safe British banks. In this way France kept a very large sum of money (consisting of the foreign sterling bills of exchange it had bought up) in London, and this helped London in its fight against New York.

Meanwhile the trade crisis and depression had been growing and agricultural prices falling. Wheat prices fell so low in the autumn of 1930 that banks in east Europe could not realise monies from their debtors and so could not pay back the money they had borrowed in pounds and dollars in Vienna. This led to a banking crisis in Vienna and the greatest Viennese bank, the Credit-Anstalt, failed and collapsed. This again shock up the German banks and a collapse of the mark seemed to be imminent. This would have meant danger to American and British capital in Germany, and it was to avoid this that President Hoover proclaimed a moratorium on debts and reparations. To have insisted on payment of reparations then would have meant complete financial collapse of Germany. As it happened, even this was not enough and Germany could not even pay its private debts to other countries and a moratorium for these had also to be given her.

This meant that plenty of English money, which had been given in short-term loans to Germany, was locked up there, "frozen" as it is called. The position of London bankers became difficult as they had to meet their liabilities and they had been counting on getting their money from Germany. France and America came to their help by lending £130 million pounds, but this came too late. Panic spread in London financial circles and when such a panic occurs everybody wants to take out his money. The £130 million pounds vanished quickly. You must remember that the pound was on the gold standard and anyone who had sterling could demand gold.

The British government, which was a Labour

government at the time, wanted to borrow more money and anxiously asked New York and Paris bankers for it. It appears that they agreed to help subject to some conditions, one of these being that the British government must economise in labour matters, in social services, etc., and perhaps wage cuts were also suggested. This was interference by foreign bankers in Britain's domestic affairs. The situation was exploited against the Labour government, and Ramsay MacDonald, the Prime Minister and head of that government, betrayed it and his own party, and formed another government with the support chiefly of the Conservatives. This was called the "National Government" formed to meet the crisis. This action of Ramsay MacDonald is one of the most remarkable instances of desertion in the history of the European labour movement.

The National government had come in to save the pound. It got the promised loan from France and America but even with its help it could not save the pound. On September 23, 1931, the government was forced to abandon the gold standard and the pound again became unstable currency. The pound fell rapidly and was worth only about 14 shillings in gold, that is roughly two-thirds of its former value.

This was the event and the date which produced a great impression in the world. It was looked upon by Europe as a sign of the approaching disruption of the British Empire for it meant the end of London's domination of the World money market. These expectations or wishes (for there is little love for the British Empire in Europe or America, not to mention Asia) proved somewhat premature.

The fall of the pound shook up the currencies of many countries which had kept sterling paper money as if it was gold, because it could be changed for gold at any time. Now that sterling could not be changed for gold and had fallen 30 per cent. in value, the currencies of some of these other countries fell also, and they were dragged down by England to abandon the

gold standard.

France was now in a strong position; its cautious policy had paid. While America and especially England had their credits frozen in Germany and were in need of money, France had plenty of money in foreign bills as well as in gold francs. Both the American and British governments made love to France and tried hard to induce her to side with each against the other. But France, over-cautious, refused to fall in with either scheme and so let the chance of bargaining go by.

In England there was a general election for Parliament at the end of 1931 and this resulted in an overwhelming victory for the "National Government", in reality for the Conservative Party. The Labour Party was almost wiped out. Frightened by stories that Labour might confiscate their capital, and perhaps also terrified by the short-lived mutiny of the British sailors of the Atlantic Fleet over wage reductions, the British bourgeoisie flocked to the Conservative National Government. This government is still in power in England. Ramsay MacDonald is prime minister but the most powerful man in it is Stanley Baldwin, the leader of the Conservative Party. It is this party which wholly dominates Parliament and British policy.

In spite of crisis and danger, after the fall of the pound, the three leading nations, America, Britain and France, or their bankers, could not co-operate together. Each played a love hand hoping to better its own position at the cost of the others. Instead of fighting for financial leadership they could have joined together to form a joint international exchange market. But each preferred to go its own way. The Bank of England set out to recover for London its lost position and, to the world's astonishment, it has largely succeeded in doing so during the last eighteen months, although the pound is still off gold.

When England went off the gold standard, the official banks of other countries (these banks are called Central Banks) sold off the sterling bills of exchange

that they possessed to get gold instead. They had kept the sterling bills so far because they were at any time changeable into gold and could thus be counted as gold. When large numbers of these bills were sold suddenly the value of the pound fell rapidly by 30 per cent. This fall in value induced debtors (including some governments and big businesses) who owed their debts in sterling to pay up in gold as they had to pay 30 per cent. less now. A good deal of gold thus came into England.

But the real flow of gold to England was from India and Egypt. These poor and dependent countries were made to come to rich England's assistance and their hidden resources were utilised to strengthen England's financial position. They had not much say in the matter; their desire or interests counted for little in face of England's need.

The story of the poor rupee in India is a long and sad one from India's point of view. It has been made to change about in value repeatedly to serve the interests of the British government and British capital. I am not going into these currency matters here except to tell you that the post-war activities of the British government in India in regard to currency matters cost India vast sums of money. Then in 1927 a great controversy arose in India about the fixing of the value of the rupee in relation to the pound sterling and gold (the pound was then on the gold standard). This was called the 'ratio controversy,' because the government wanted to fix the value at one shilling six pence and Indian opinion almost unanimously wanted it fixed at one shilling four pence. The question was the old one of giving a higher value to money and thus profiting bankers and creditors and holders of money and encouraging foreign imports, or a lower value and lessening the burden on debtors and encouraging home industries and exports. The government of course had its way in spite of Indian opinion and one-sixth was fixed as the gold rupee value. There was thus in the opinion of many a slight deflation, an

overvaluation of the rupee. Only England had gone in for deflation, when bringing the pound on the gold standard in 1925, and this was, as we have seen, to retain her financial leadership of the world for which she was prepared to sacrifice much. France, Germany and other countries preferred inflation to ease their economic situation.

This higher value of the rupee meant an increased value of the British capital invested in India. It also meant a burden on Indian industry as the prices of Indian goods went up slightly. Above all it meant an added burden on all the peasants and land-owners who were indebted to the *bania*, for as the value of money went up, the value of these debts also went up. The difference between eighteen pence and sixteen pence that is two pence, represented a rise of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Suppose the agricultural indebtedness of India is Rs. 900 crores; a $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. addition to it means an addition of the enormous sum of Rs. 150 crores.

In terms of money of course the debts remained the same as before. But in terms of prices of agricultural produce the debts went up. The real value of money is what it will buy, so much wheat, or clothes, or other articles or commodities. This value adjusts itself if allowed to do so. A fall in buying power of money results in a fall in currency. To fix an artificially higher value is to give it an artificial buying power which it does not really possess. Thus the peasant found that more of his income now went to the payment of his debts and interest on them, and he had less left over. In this way the one-sixth ratio added to the depression in India.

When the pound sterling was forced off gold in September, 1931, the rupee also went off but it was kept tied to the pound. Thus the one-sixth ratio remained but this represented a smaller amount of gold now. The rupee was kept linked to sterling so that British capital might not suffer in India, for if the rupee had been left to itself it might have fallen lower and thus

caused loss to sterling capital. As it was loss was only caused to non-British foreign capital in India-American, Japanese, etc., because of the lesser gold value. Another great advantage to England in having the rupee linked with the pound was that this enabled her to pay for raw material purchased for her industries in British currency. The bigger the sterling area the better for the pound.

As the rupee fell in value with the pound, the internal price of gold naturally went up, that is, gold could fetch more rupees. The great hardships and privation in the country induced people to sell whatever gold they possessed in the shape of ornaments, etc., to get more rupees for it in order to pay their debts. So gold flowed in tiny streamlets from all over the country to the banks, and the banks made a profit by selling it on the London market. In this way Indian gold flowed continuously to England and the process still continues. It is stated that so far gold worth Rs. 146 crores has gone from India to England. This is equivalent to over £100 millions. It is this gold, as well as the gold that has similarly come from Egypt, that has saved the situation for the Bank of England and British finance, and enabled them to pay back the money borrowed in September, 1931, from America and France.

Now it is a strange fact that while every country in the world, including the richest countries, is trying hard to keep its own gold and to add to it, India is doing the very opposite. The American and French governments have hoarded up a huge amount of gold in their bank vaults. It has been a strange process of digging out the gold from the mine only to bury it again deep down in the underground bank vaults. Many countries, including British dominions, have declared embargos on gold, that is, no one is permitted to take it out of the country. England went off from the gold standard to preserve her gold. But not so India, because India's financial policy is governed in the interests of England.

There is often talk of gold and silver hoarding in

India, and to some extent, among the handfull of the rich, this is correct. But the masses are far too poor to hoard anything. The better class peasantry have a few odd ornaments which represent their 'hoard'. They have no banking facilities. These petty ornaments and reserves of gold in India have been drawn away by the depression and the rise in price of gold. A national government would have kept this gold in the country as a reserve, as gold is the only recognised international medium of payment.

To go back to our story of the pound's struggle with the dollar. By these methods and other clever devices, which I need not mention here, the Bank of England strengthened its position greatly. Early in 1932 it had a bit of luck as there was a banking crisis in the United States owing to American money also being frozen in Germany. During this crisis many Americans sold their dollars and bought sterling bonds. Thus the British government got plenty of foreign bills of exchange in dollars, which it then presented in New York to the Government bank there and took gold instead. The dollar being on the gold standard, anyone could demand gold for it. In this way the British gold reserve mounted up without any mishap or further decline of the pound, which remained unstable and off gold. With plenty of foreign bills of exchange and securities also, the City of London became again the great central market of international exchange. New York was defeated for the time being, largely because of its great banking crisis in which, as I have told you in an earlier letter, thousands of small banks perished.

THE CAPITALIST WORLD FAILS TO PULL TOGETHER

July 28, 1933

What a long story of financial rivalry and manœuvring I have told you, and I am afraid you will not thank me for it! Indeed I am rather sorry I wrote on this subject and feel inclined to advise you to slip it. It is such a tangled web of international intrigue that it is no easy matter to unravel it or, having entered it, to get out of it. I have only tried to give you the barest glimpse of what appears more or less on the surface, and much of what happens never sees the surface or the light of day.

In the modern world the banker's and financier's part is a tremendous one. Even the days of the lords of industry are past; it is the big banker who controls industry, agriculture, railways and the transport system, indeed, to some extent everything, including the government. For as industry and trade have advanced they have ever required bigger sums and the banks have supplied them. Much of the world's work is now done on credit and it is the big bank that enlarges or restricts and controls credit. The industrialist and the agriculturist both have to go to the bank for loans of money to carry on work. Not only is this lending business a profitable one for the bankers but it increases their control gradually over industry and agriculture. By refusing to lend or demanding their money back at a critical moment they can upset the borrower's business or force him to agree to any terms. This applies both within a country and in the international sphere, for the big central banks lend money to the governments of

different countries and thus exercise pressure on them. New York bankers in this way control many of the governments of Central and South America.

A remarkable feature of these big banks is that they prosper both in good times and bad. In good times they share in the general prosperity of business and money rolls in and is lent out by them at profitable rates. In bad times of depression and crises they hold tight to money and do not risk it (and thus add to the depression for without credit it is difficult to run many businesses), but they profit in another way. Prices of everything fall, of land, factories, etc., and many industries go bankrupt. The bank thereupon comes and buys everything up cheap! It is thus to the bankers' interest to have cycles of prosperity and depression.

In the present great depression the big banks have continued to do well and have paid good dividends. It is true that thousands of banks have failed in the United States and some big ones in Austria and Germany. The banks that have failed in America were all small ones; the American banking system seems to have been wrong. But even so the big banks of New York have done fairly well. There has been no bank failure in England. Of course if the depression continues it will ultimately effect the biggest banks, as it did in Germany and Austria where conditions were especially bad.

Bankers therefore are the real bosses in the capitalist world to-day, and people have called our times the 'Financial Age', coming after the purely Industrial Age. Millionaires and multi-millionaires crop up in western countries, and especially in America, the land of millionaires, and are much admired. But daily it is becoming more evident that the methods of 'high finance' are most shady, and differ from what is usually considered robbery and deception only in the big scale of their operations. Huge monopolies crush all small concerns, and big financial operations, which few people can understand, fleece the poor confiding investor. Some of the biggest financiers in Europe and America

have been exposed recently, and the sight was not a pleasant one.

We have seen that the struggle for financial leadership between England and America ended for the time being in London's victory. But what was the prize of this victory? While the struggle had gone on for a dozen years this prize had been gradually vanishing. Especially during the last four years the great depression spread and ate up trade and industry. Exports fell to one-third what they were at this meant that commercial paper, bills of exchange, were also reduced by two-thirds. As commercial paper became scarcer, it became necessary to use something else instead and financial paper, that is securities, etc., was more sought after. Here again there was a big decline. Owing to depression and slackness of business and industry fresh shares and securities were not issued, and old securities fell in value to half or even less of what they used to be. This fall in value continues and, if nothing happens to check it, may eventually reach zero!

So that both commercial paper and financial paper have become scarce, and yet the interest payments on huge public and private debts have remained constant. The debtor countries have been hard put to it what to do and how to pay. There being nothing else available for international payments, the demand for gold has increased, especially in the poor countries. And yet gold has flown away from these countries to the richer ones, as the men with any capital in the poor countries with a changing and falling currency, have bought foreign securities to protect their money. So the rich country gets richer in gold and the poor one poorer. The countries with big gold hoards now are: the United States, France, Switzerland and Holland. England has also built up a fair reserve in gold now.

But all this accumulation of gold and wealth, and the latest technique of her industry, did not help America much as the depression grew and the number of her unemployed went up till it reached fifteen

millions. Wages, which had been the highest in the world, went down rapidly and the standard of life fell with them. The great land of opportunity which had attracted men and women from afar became a land of despair. Big Business had ruled the country, and this Big Business was exposed in many official enquiries and found to be thoroughly corrupt. Thus confidence in the leaders of finance and industry was shaken. Herbert Hoover, who was president during all this period of the depression, did little to meet the crisis. He was supposed to be a friend of Big Business and he left it freedom to do what it chose, with the result that he became tremendously unpopular. At the four-yearly presidential election which was held in November, 1932, he was defeated by Frank Roosevelt by a huge majority. The vast numbers of the American Middle classes turned to Roosevelt in their despair and looked to him to pull them out of their troubles. Although elected in November, 1932, under the American Constitution, the new president did not take office till March, 1933. Meanwhile conditions became worse all over the world and there was much talk of holding a great World Economic Conference where all the countries of the world might meet together to devise means to fight the depression.

Early in March, 1933, just as Roosevelt was being installed as president of the United States, another banking crisis attacked America. It was severe and panic spread, so much so that all banks had to be closed for a while. This led to the United States abandoning the gold standard. The dollar had followed the pound and separated itself from gold. There was no lack of gold in the country; indeed America had far more of it than any other country. But such are the strange ways of modern international finance that, even so, America had to abandon the gold standard, and declare an embargo on gold leaving the country. The real object probably was to make the dollar fall in value in order to lessen the burden on industry and agriculture at the cost

of the banks and creditors. I explained to you in my last letter how fixing the value of the rupee at eighteen pence meant an appreciation in the value of money in India, and this meant an addition to the debt burden of the people. President Roosevelt did the opposite of this by allowing a depression of the dollar. The strange part of this was that the fall in dollar value was resented in England because it took away from the pound the advantage it had secured in leaving the gold standard. France also was much put out by America leaving the gold standard, for now France was the only big country that remained on it, and it was becoming increasingly difficult for her to do so. If the other great countries like America and England were going to sit tight on their gold and prevent it going out, how long could France continue to pay out her gold to all who had French paper money and demanded gold in its place?

In all the western countries there was doubt and uncertainty about the future, and the still unsettled question of war debts added to this. The proposed World Economic Conference seemed a possible way out. Perhaps something might be done there, some agreement reached to prevent mutual rivalry and throat-cutting. It was risky to meet in conference and fail, for the last hope of co-operation might then disappear. 'If the Conference fails', said a well-known American economist, 'the whole capitalist structure will go smash'; a British minister said something to the same effect: 'If the Conference were to fail, disappointment, reaction and revolt would follow'. The risk was great because no common plan was visible, but the risk had to be taken. 'This cannot go on', said Ramsay MacDonald, a way out must be found.

This was of course not the first international conference of the kind to be held. Ever since the end of the World War there have been innumerable conferences; this is indeed the Age of Conferences. As many as twenty-seven international financial and economic conferences had already been held since the war. This

one was going to be the twenty-eighth. The world has been driven by sheer force of events and the development of modern industry to seek international co-operation. The attempt is made repeatedly, but it fails because, apparently of the inherent nature of capitalist society, which is not meant for such co-operation. Conferences pass pious resolutions and no action follows. The greatest failure in international co-operation is that of the League of Nations.

On June 16, 1933, the World Economic Conference met in London with all pomp and circumstances, attended by delegates from sixty-six countries. Eloquent speeches were made. The United States delegate referred to the "panic-ridden world" and pointed out the folly for nations to adopt a "policy of economic isolation, each futilely striving to lead a hermit's life." As soon as the eloquent platitudes were over, difficulties appeared. America refused to discuss the question of war debts in the conference; that was a matter for private discussion. This was the first blow. Then came a manœuvring for position between the United States, England and France on the question of stabilizing the currencies which were off gold, that is the pound and dollar. France and the remaining gold countries were carrying on under strain because the pound and dollar were off gold and they wanted these two to be stabilized. The United States and England, however, did not want to commit themselves yet, and were watching carefully each other's moves. All this has resulted in a collapse of the Conference. The attempt at co-operation has failed and each country will try to face the crisis by itself and regardless of others, to lead a 'hermit's life', and to build up, if possible, a self-sufficient economy. The capitalist structure will not suddenly smash up, or a revolution break out, as predicted by some of the leaders of capitalism themselves, simply because the conference has failed. But there can be no doubt that capitalism has received another kick from this failure, and its future road goes steeply downhill.

The German government has already stated publicly that it is not in a position to pay any of its external debts, public or private. It has asked for a long moratorium, but there is little chance of payment in future, so Germany's action is tantamount to a default. Her conditions are put in a difficult position, for the bankruptcy of the debtor sometimes brings disaster to the creditors. It was the German crisis in 1931 that led to England giving up the gold standard and the pound falling.

British policy has been clearly laid down to be one of economic nationalism. 'We must', says the British chancellor of the exchequer, 'continue to pursue our own course independently in the interests of this country and of the Empire'. And he refuses to link sterling with gold or with the dollar. It is not possible for England, as it is to a large extent for the United States, to be self-sufficient. England does not ever grow enough food for herself, and the raw materials for her industries come from abroad. It was because of this that she had stuck to free trade and allowed foreign goods to come in with little or no customs duties on them. The struggle of world trade and her own trade and the crisis generally have forced her to give up free trade and to put tariffs on foreign articles. This was to raise revenue and at least to protect the home market for British goods. A more ambitious attempt has been made to make the British Empire into one economic unit based on sterling prices. The Empire is big enough and varied enough and it produces enough food and material for England. It was thus in theory possible to have a self-sufficient empire, and this large area with the pound sterling exchange and a closed market was a great advantage to England. The pound may rise or fall in relation to the dollar or franc, but this would make no difference to an area where it was linked to a local currency like the rupee.

With this idea in view a British Empire Conference was held in Ottawa (Canada) in 1932. It was soon

evident at this conference that it was not such an easy matter to cut off the Empire countries from the rest of the world and make them one unit. It was easy enough for England to coerce India in the matter of the rupee or any other matter but Canada, Australia and South Africa were not going to give up anything just for the benefit of the 'mother country'. South Africa even remained for some time more on the gold standard (it is a gold producing country) and did not join the sterling exchange area. There was a great deal of haggling and bargaining at Ottawa and the conference was almost breaking up when England gave in to the demands of the Dominions. She did so at some loss to her own industries. Political and imperial reasons prevailed with her for she could not afford to break up the conference. That would have been a severe blow to the Empire. So it was arranged to give preference, wherever possible, to British Empire goods and to keep out foreign goods. In India there has been strong feeling, ever since this question has arisen, against giving preference (that is lower or no duties) to British goods. Partly the reason for this may be political, but it is also due to a feeling that it is harmful for us to cut down our trade with other foreign countries and rely on British trade only. However, the present Assembly in Delhi, which is very far from representing the Indian people, ratified the Ottawa agreement. One of the results of this was to lower the prices of British goods in relation to other foreign goods in India, for these latter were more highly taxed at the ports. This advantage was utilized by the government and British industry in fighting the movement in India for the boycott of British goods.

A year of working has shown that the Ottawa policy has not been a success and there is a great deal of friction between the Dominions and England, especially Canada which is a growing industrial country in close relations with the United States. Some branches of English industry have also suffered, and as a result of

tariffs all round, prices have gone up in England thus raising the cost of living. So the Ottawa policy has not been a great success, though it has brought temporary relief to some industries.

To add to the troubles of the British Empire, Japan has made a fierce attack on Empire markets—in India, Australia, South Africa, and even England. I have told you of Japanese aggression in Manchuria and China and their deliberate defiance of the League of Nations. Japan was able to act in this way largely because of the secret support received from England. Anglo-American rivalry was indirectly helpful to Japan. America took up a strong attitude against Japanese aggression but had to tone it down because of England's lukewarmness in regard to it. A greater danger came to Japan from her domestic economic troubles and financial crisis. The Japanese coin, the Yen, fell in value rapidly. Advantage was taken of this depreciation, which led to the cheapening of Japanese goods, to flood foreign markets. Japanese goods were so cheap that even tariff barriers could hardly stop them. Their very cheapness broke the back of the Chinese boycott of Japanese goods. All eastern markets and even South Africa and Australia were flooded with them. In England a shirt was sold for a shilling, socks for two pence! Germany was also hard hit. It was quite impossible to compete with such prices. British manufacturers called this Japanese competition an 'economic terror.' In India an outcry rose against it and fresh heavy duties were put on Japanese goods. In retaliation the Japanese have boycotted Indian cotton which they used to purchase, and this is hitting the Indian agriculturists who grow cotton.

How have the Japanese managed to cut prices so terribly low? Partly because of the fall of the Yen, partly because they pay low wages to their girl factory workers, partly because of government subsidies, and partly because the Japanese shipping companies help by charging very low freights. But it must also be admitted that the Japanese have shown efficiency in business

and industry and they are producing not only cheap but good articles. It is not generally known that many of the old British industries are very backward now and even their machinery is not up-to-date. The new British industries, like artificial silk and motoring, are efficient. Indian industries are usually far from efficient.

As this terrible Japanese competition spreads, other countries, and especially the British empire countries, are shutting up their markets against them. If Japanese goods are thus shut out what is Japan to do? Her enormous industries must go to pieces and her whole economic system upset, unless she can find an equally big market in the interior of China, which is highly unlikely. This is just the kind of wasteful competition that occurs under the capitalist system, and which leads to trouble and economic reprisals (as we see in India to-day) and eventually even to war.

In the same way if the British home market is closed to the other countries of Europe, it means the ruin of many of these countries. So that we find that all the steps that are being taken by each country for its own immediate good hurt other countries, and international trade, and lead to friction and trouble.

REVOLUTION IN SPAIN

July 29, 1933

I shall take you away now from the long and depressing account of the trade depression and the so-called crisis which, far from being a decisive moment, as a crisis should be, has become a fixed and almost permanent companion; I shall lead you away from this and tell you of two outstanding events of the last two years. These two events are: the revolution in Spain and the counter-revolution in Germany.

Spain and Portugal form the south-west corner of Europe and they have played an important part in Europe's past history. We have had some glimpses of this part in the course of these letters—of the long and brilliant Arab period and the glories of Cordoba and Granada; of famous voyages by daring navigators; of the division of the world between them by the Pope and the founding of Empires in the Americas and the East Indies; of the wealth that poured into their ports from this wide-spread empire and the eastern trade; of their predominance in Europe for a while, and the struggle against Spain of the Netherlands for freedom; and then of decline and loss of Empire. This south-west corner was little touched by western Europe's industrialism and it remained poor and backward and priest-ridden. The governments of both Spain and Portugal were more or less autocratic monarchies with feeble parliamentary assemblies, in Spain this assembly being called the 'Cortes'. For a brief period in the early seventies of the nineteenth century Spain had a republic but this was not success and the king managed to come back. In 1898 war with the United States of America over Cuba

resulted in Spain losing almost the last of her colonies. Cuba became independent and the Philippine Islands were taken possession of by the Americans, very much against the will of the Filipinos. Spain, so far as I can remember, has no colonies now except an area of influence or domination in Morocco.

Portugal has managed to keep not only tiny bits of India, like Goa, but also big colonial areas in Africa. In 1910 the king was dethroned and a republic established, and ever since then there have been several revolts both royalist, trying to get back the king, and left wing, socialists and others, trying to get rid of dictators and reactionary governments. The republic has however continued in some form or other and is usually dominated by a military group. It took the part of the Anglo-French and their allies during the Great War and came out of it with a heavy debt which led it to bankruptcy. Since 1926 the country has been under the military dictatorship of General Carmona. Rumours of revolt come frequently and, as I write, there is again such a report. It is obvious that there is no stability about the present régime.

In Spain, as I wrote to you in previous letter, there was also a military dictatorship under Primo de Rivera after several disasters in the Morocco campaign against Abd El Karim. This dictatorship gave place ultimately to the Spanish Republic. The old monarchical structure was thoroughly rotten and, like Tsardom in Russia, it fell to pieces almost without an attempt to face its opponents. A sweeping republican victory at the municipal elections held in April, 1931, was enough to frighten the king (who was both a Bourbon and Hapsburg) into running away. The date of this revolution was April 14, 1931, when a Provisional Government was established.

This Spanish revolution bears a striking resemblance to the first Russian revolution, that of March, 1917. In both cases the revolution represented a belated attempt to wipe out feudalism and the chief pressure

for this came from agrarian misery and discontent. The condition of Spain since the revolution has also been like that of Russia between the two revolutions March and November, 1917. There is no stability and various classes pull different ways. Counter-revolutionary risings have taken place and have been suppressed; so also revolts from the extreme left. What will happen ultimately in Spain it is difficult to say, but this resemblance to Russia does make one think that perhaps a second revolution will follow here too giving the working class and peasantry control of the State machine. This may not take place for some years. In Russia developments took place at lightning speed because of the continuation of the war and the havoc and misery caused by it. Spain has also got a stronger middle class than Russia had and this class has been able to keep the bourgeois republic going. A third reason for the comparatively longer life of the Spanish middle class democratic régime is that it has attacked the problem of agrarian reform with some spirit and thus has eased the agrarian situation. But in spite of all this there seems to be a fundamental instability in Spain to-day. There is a great deal of repression, and repression on a large scale is always a sign, whether in Spain or India or elsewhere, of fear on the part of the governing machine and of instability.

The present government in Spain is described as a left liberal democracy with just a tinge of socialism. The prime minister, Manuel Azana, is supposed to be the strong man of the government and the country. The president is Alcalá Zamora. Azana, though not a socialist himself, is supported in the Cortes, the Spanish parliament, by the socialist party, which is the strongest and best organised party in the country. This party has the trade unions behind it and, though it is marxist in its socialism, it opposes communism. The Communist Party is weak in Spain. But a powerful party is that of the anarchists or the 'Anarcho-Syndicalists' as they are called.

I told you in a previous letter how anarchism—do not mix this up with just bomb-throwing and the like—flourished in the southern European countries which were backward industrially. While in England and Germany the labour movement was built up on solid trade union lines, in Italy and Spain anarchist ideas were more popular. The old conflict of Karl Marx and Bakunin took place on this issue and Bakunin got most of his followers from the South. Because of this Bakunin was driven out of the First International by Marx. Anarchism has however continued in Spain more than in any other country and it is strongest in Barcelona on the east coast. There was a big Anarchist revolt in January, 1933, but it was suppressed.

It is not quite clear what these Anarcho-Syndicalists want; at any rate I have been unable to understand them or their policy, which seems rather futile. Apart from them, there are two main schools of thought in Spain. One of them, which is in power now, wants to pass through the stage of liberal democracy and gradually to approximate to socialism; the other wants to go straight ahead to full socialism or collectivism and to start with a clean state.

The new Spanish constitution has some interesting features. There is only one chamber, the Cortes, and universal suffrage is provided for. The unique feature is that the president is forbidden to declare war without the sanction of the League of Nations. All International covenants recorded in the League of Nations and ratified by Spain become Spanish law immediately, and even overrule positive legislation that conflicts with them.

Early legislation provided that no person or family was to hold more than 25 acres of irrigated land and even this could only be kept so long as it was under cultivation. Workers' committees in factories were given the power to supervise in some ways the management of the factory. Monopolies owned privately were nationalised. A big educational programme of opening

28000 new schools in three years was decided upon. A minimum wage for workers was also fixed.

These and many other laws were passed but they were not all acted upon. And yet a great deal has undoubtedly been done in the last two years. The two great problems which the Republic has attacked have been the problem of the church, and the agrarian problem.

Spain has for centuries been the great Catholic country. The Inquisition started here; the founder of the Jesuit order was a Spaniard. The Church made its influence felt in every department of activity but most of all on the educational system which was largely under its control. The Republic has broken this old grip on education. The Cortes has nationalised Church property worth \$500,000,000, and withdrawn the right of 80,000 monks and nuns to teach in schools. It is intended that by January 1, 1934, all primary and secondary schools will be in the hands of the state.

This policy has naturally led to a conflict with the Pope in Rome. The Pope apparently threatened the president with ex-communication and he got so scared that he dismissed Azana from the premiership in June, 1933. But there was no one to take Azana's place and so he returned soon after as prime minister.

The second problem, that of the peasantry, is still far from solved. It was the government's intention to give compensation to the land-owners for the estates they took over, giving a lower scale of compensation to the larger estates. This process was very slow and peasants in the outlying areas took the law into their own hands, as in Russia, and seized many estates. This shook up the government and they hurried through with their legislation. Just then, fortunately for them, there was a monarchical rising in which many big nobles and land-owners took part. The rising was easily suppressed and the government got a good excuse for confiscating the estates of those people who had taken part in the rising. Some other big estates were also confiscated because

"their origin was irregular". These confiscated estates were then distributed among the peasantry.

In spite of all this there are still privately owned large estates, and the general economic and financial control of the State is in the hand of conservatives. The government has so far avoided coming to grips with this basic economic problem.

Good progress has been made in the educational programme and ten thousand new schools had been built by the beginning of 1933.

One of the difficult problems before the government was that of Catalonia, the province on the east coast which has Barcelona for capital and is a hot bed of anarchism. This province has long had a separatist movement and when Spain became a republic, Catalonia declared itself as a separate republic. Matters seem to have been compromised, however, by the grant to Catalonia of a great deal of autonomy or self-government under the Spanish Republic.

Old and slow-moving Spain is thus changing rapidly from day to day. The hold of the Church has been broken, the nobility has been thoroughly weakened and feudalism is fast disappearing. Land reform has brought some relief to the peasantry, but much remains to be done before the peasants are satisfied. The question is whether the bourgeois democratic republic will be able to carry on with this programme of reform or whether the 'second' revolution will take place and start with a clean state.

THE NAZIS TRIUMPH IN GERMANY

July 31, 1933

The Spanish Revolution surprised some people but in reality there was nothing surprising in it. It took place in the natural order of events and close observers knew that it was inevitable. The old structure of king-feudalism-church was moth-eaten and had no strength left. It was quite out of keeping with modern conditions and so, like a ripe fruit, it fell down almost at a push. In India also there are still many such feudal relics of a bygone age; they would probably disappear quickly enough if they were not bolstered up by a foreign power.

The recent changes in Germany are, however, of a totally different kind and there is no doubt that they have shaken up Europe and stupefied numbers of people. We are too near them still to judge of them with any detachment for every day brings fresh news which irritates one or even angers. To a distant observer it almost seems that the majority of the German people had gone off their heads; there seems no other obvious explanation of their brutal and barbarous behaviour, and that of course is no explanation. That a cultured and highly advanced people like the Germans should behave in this way is an amazing experience.

Hitler and his Nazis have triumphed in Germany. They have been called fascist and their victory a victory of counter-revolution, a going back on the German revolution of 1918 and what has followed it. All this is perfectly true and you will find all the elements of fascism in Hitlerism, and a fierce reaction, and a savage attack on all liberal elements and especially workers.

And yet it is something much more than just reaction and something broader and more based on mass sentiment than Italian fascism. That mass sentiment is not that of the majority, the workers, but of a starving dispossessed middle class turned revolutionary.

In a previous letter dealing with Italy I discussed fascism and I pointed out that it occurred when a capitalist state was threatened during an economic crisis, by social revolution. The owning capitalist classes tried to protect themselves by creating a mass movement, round a nucleus of the lower middle class, using misleading anti-capitalist slogans to attract the unwary peasants and workers. Having seized power and gained control of the State, they scrap all democratic institutions and crush their enemies and especially break up all workers' organizations. Their rule is thus primarily based on violence. The middle class supporters are given jobs in the new state and usually some measure of state control of industry is introduced.

We find all this taking place in Germany and it was even expected. But what is surprising is the tremendous urge behind it and the numbers of people who have joined Hitler.

The Nazi counter-revolution took place five months ago, in March, 1933. But I shall take you a little further back to watch the beginnings of the movement.

The German Revolution of 1918 was really a bogus affair; it was no revolution at all. The Kaiser went and a republic was proclaimed, but the old political, social and economic system continued. For a few years the moderate Marxists, the Social Democrats, controlled the government. They were greatly afraid of the old reactionary and vested interests and were always trying to compromise with them. They had a tremendously powerful machine behind them in their party, with millions of members, and the trade unions, and they had the sympathy of many others. But their policy was always a defensive one before the reactionary

elements; they were only aggressive towards their own extreme wing and the Communist Party. They bungled their job so badly that many of their supporters left them. The workers who left them went over to the Communist Party, which became quite powerful with several million members, and middle class supporters went off to reactionary parties. Between the Social Democrats and the Communists there was continuous war which weakened both.

When the great German inflation came in the post-war years the German industrialists and big land-owners were in favour of it. The landlords who were heavily in debt with their estates mortgaged, paid off their debts in the inflated currency, which was almost worthless, and recovered possession of their estates. The big factory owners improved their plants and huge trusts were built up. German goods became so cheap that they found a ready market everywhere and unemployment vanished. The working class was strongly organised in trade unions and it succeeded in keeping up wages even though the mark fell. The inflation hit the middle class and reduced it to abject poverty. It is this dispossessed middle class of 1923-24 that joined Hitler first. As the depression spread owing to failures of banks and increase of unemployment, many others joined Hitler. He became a refuge for the discontented. Another big source he drew from was the office class of the old army. This army had been disbanded after the war, under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, and thousands of officers were unemployed and had nothing to do. They drifted to the various private armies that were growing up—the Nazi ‘Storm Troops,’ as they were called, and the ‘Steel-helmets’ of the Nationalists, who were conservatives in favour of the Kaiser’s return.

Who was Adolf Hitler? Surprising as it is, he was not even a German citizen till a year or two ago. He was a German—Austrian who had served in the war in a humble capacity. He took part in an abortive rising

against the German Republic—a 'putsch'—but was leniently treated by the authorities. He then organised his party called the 'National Sozialist' (National Socialist) to oppose the Social Democrats. The word Nazi comes from this name: Na from *National* and zi from *Sozialist*. Although the party was called socialist it had absolutely nothing to do with Socialism. Hitler was and is a sworn enemy of socialism as it is ordinarily understood. The party adopted as a symbol the *swāstika*, a sanskrit word, but the sign has been well-known all over the world from ancient times. The Nazis also organized a fighting force, the 'Storm Troops' with a brown shirt for uniform. The Nazis are thus often called the 'brown shirts', like the Italian fascist black-shirts.

The programme of the Nazis was not a clear or a positive one. It was intensely nationalistic and laid stress on the greatness of Germany and the Germans, and for the rest it was a hotch-potch of various anti-sentiments. It was anti the Treaty of Versailles, which was considered a humiliation for Germany, and this attracted many people to the Nazis. It was anti-Marxist-Communist-socialist and opposed to workers' trade unions and the like. It was anti-Jew because Jews were considered an alien race which defiled and lowered the high standards of the 'Aryan' German race. It was vaguely anti-capitalist but this only amounted to cursing profiteers and the rich. The only socialism it talked of rather loosely was a measure of state control.

Behind all this lay an extraordinary philosophy of violence. Not only was violence praised and encouraged but it was considered the highest duty of man. A famous German philosopher, Oswald Spengler, is an exponent of this philosophy. Man, he says, is a "beast of prey, brave and crafty and cruel" "Ideals are cowardice" "The animal of prey is the highest form of mobile life". He refers to "the toothless feeling of sympathy and reconciliation and quiet", and to "Hate, the most genuine of all race-feelings in the beast

of prey." Man should be like the lion, never tolerating an equal in his den, and not like the meek cow, living in herds and driven hither and thither. For such a man war is of course the supreme occupation and joy.

Oswald Spengler is one of the most learned men of the day; the books he has written surprise one by the enormous amount of learning they contain. And all this vast learning has led him to these astounding and hateful conclusions! I have quoted him because he enables us to understand the mentality behind Hitlerism and explains the cruelty and brutality of the past few months. Of course one should not imagine that every Nazi thinks this way. But the leaders and the aggressive elements certainly think so and they set the fashion. It will perhaps be more correct to say that the average Nazi did not think at all. He felt roused up by his own misery and the national humiliation (the French occupation of the Ruhr was bitterly resented in Germany) and angry at things as they were. From all accounts Hitler is a wonderful orator and he played on the emotions of his vast audiences and cast all the blame for everything that was happening on the Marxists and the Jews. If Germany was treated badly by France or other foreign countries this became a reason for more people to join the Nazis for the Nazis would protect the honour of Germany. If the economic crisis became worse, recruits poured in.

The Social Democratic Party soon lost control over the government, and another group the Catholic Centre Party came into power because of the rivalries of others. No single party was strong enough to ignore others, in the Reichstag (the parliament) and so there were frequent elections and intrigues and party manoeuvres. The growth of the Nazis frightened the Social Democrats so much that they supported the capitalist Centre Party and the election of the old general Hindenburg for the presidency. In spite of the growth of the Nazis, the two workers' parties, the Social Democratic and the Communist, were strong and each had millions

of supporters to the last but they could not co-operate together even in face of the common danger. The communist remembered with bitterness the persecution they had been subjected to by the Social Democrats in the days of their power, from 1918 onwards, and how, at every moment of crisis, they, the Social Democrats, had sided with the reactionary groups. The Social Democratic Party, on the other hand, like the British Labour Party, with whom it was associated in the Second International, was a wealthy, wide-spread organisation with plenty of patronage at its command, and it disliked taking any risk to endanger its security and position. It was very much afraid of doing anything against the law or of indulging in what is known as direct action. It spent most of its energy in combating the Communists. And yet both of these parties were marxists of a kind.

Germany thus became an armed camp of evenly balanced forces and there were frequently riots and murders, especially by the Nazis of Communist workers. Sometimes the workers retaliated. Hitler was remarkably successful in holding together a motley crew, the various elements of which had little in common with each other. It was a curious alliance of the lower middle classes with the big industrialists on the one hand and the richer peasantry on the other. The industrialists supported Hitler and gave him money because he cursed socialism and seemed to be the only bulwark against an advancing Marxism or Communism. The poorer middle classes and peasantry and even some workers were attracted by the anti-capitalistic slogans.

Early in March, 1933, (or perhaps in February, I do not quite remember), old President Hindenburg (he is 86 years old now!) made Hitler Chancellor, which is the highest executive office in Germany, corresponding to the Prime Minister. There was an alliance between the Nazis and the Nationalists, but very soon it was obvious that the Nazis were in full command and no one else counted. A general election gave the

Nazis, with their allies the Nationalists, just a bare majority in the Reichstag. Even if they had not got this majority it would not have mattered much for the Nazis arrested their opponents in the parliament and put them in jail. All the Communist members were thus removed and many of the Social Democrats. Just then the Reichstag building caught fire and was burnt down. The Nazis stated that this was the work of the Communists and that it was a plot to undermine the state. The Communists denied this vigorously and, in fact, they accused the Nazis leaders of having caused the fire to find an excuse for attacking them.

Then began the Nazi or the Brown Terror all over Germany. To begin with parliament was wound up (although the Nazis had a majority in it) and all power was vested in Hitler and his cabinet. They could make laws or do anything they liked. The Weimer constitution of the Republic was thus scrapped and all forms of democracy openly scorned. Germany was a kind of federation; this too was ended and all power was concentrated in Berlin. Everywhere dictators were appointed, who were responsible only to the dictator next above them. Hitler was of course the dictator-in-chief.

While these changes were taking place, the Nazi Storm Troops were let loose all over Germany and they began a reign of violence and terror, amazingly savage and brutal. It was unique of its kind. There have been Terrors before, Red Terrors and White Terrors, but they always took place when a country, or a dominant group was fighting for its life in a Civil War. The Terror was a reaction of terrible danger and constant fear. The Nazis had no such danger to face, nor had they any reason to be afraid. They controlled the government and there was no armed opposition or resistance to them. The Brown Terror was thus not an outcome of passion and fear, but a deliberate, cold-blooded, and incredibly brutal suppression of all who did not fall in line with the Nazis.

It would serve no purpose to give a list of the atrocities that have taken place in Germany during the last few months, and still take place behind the scenes. There have been savage beatings and tortures and shooting and murder on a vast scale, both men and women being victims. Enormous numbers of people, variously estimated from 13000 to 60000, have been put in jails and concentration camps, and are said to be treated very badly there. The attack has been fiercest on the Communists but the more moderate Social Democrats have fared little better. A dead set has been made on the Jews, and others attacked have been pacifists, liberals, trade unionists and internationalists. The Nazis proclaim that it is a war of extermination against marxism and the marxists and indeed the entire 'Left'. Jews must also be eliminated from all posts and professions. Thousands of Jewish professors, teachers, musicians, lawyers, judges, doctors and nurses have been turned out. Jewish shop-keepers have been boycotted and Jewish workers dismissed from factories. There has been a wholesale destruction of books that the Nazis do not approve of, public burnings taking place. Newspapers have been ruthlessly suppressed for the slightest difference of opinion or criticism. No news of the Terror is allowed to be published and even a whisper of it is punished heavily.

All organisations and parties, other than the Nazi Party of course, have been suppressed. The Communist Party went first, then the Social Democratic, later the Catholic Centre Party, and lastly even the Nazi allies, the Nationalists. The mighty German trade unions, representing the labour and savings and sacrifices of generations of workers, were broken up and all their funds and properties confiscated. Only one party, one organization, was to remain—the Nazi Party.

The strange Nazi philosophy is forced down every one's throat, and such is the fear of the Terror that no one dare raise his head. Education, the theatre, art, science, everything is being given the Nazi stamp. "The

true German thinks with his blood!" says Captain Hermann Goring, one of Hitler's chief men. "The age of pure reason and of unprejudiced science is over" says another Nazi leader. Children are taught that Hitler is a second Jesus, but greater than the first. The Nazi government does not favour too much extension of education among the people, and especially among women. Indeed, woman's place, according to the Hitlerites, is the home and kitchen, and her chief job is to provide children to fight and die for the State. Dr. Joseph Goebbels, another great Nazi leader who is minister for 'public enlightenment and propaganda', has said that: "woman's place is in the family; her proper task is to provide her country and her people with children. . . . The liberation of women is a danger to the State. She must leave to man the things that belong to man." This same Dr. Goebbels has also told us what his method is of enlightening the public: "It is my intention to play on the press as on a piano."

Behind all this barbarism and brutality and fire and thunder lay the privation and hunger of the dispossessed middle classes. It was really a fight for jobs and bread. Jewish doctors, lawyers, teachers, nurses, etc., were turned out because the 'Aryan' Germans had not been able to compete with them and looked hungrily at their success and wanted their jobs. Jewish shops were closed because they were successful rivals. Many of the non-Jewish shops were also closed and their owners were arrested by the Nazis because they were suspected of profiteering and charging unreasonably high prices. The peasant supporters of the Nazis have been casting longing eyes on the big estates in East Prussia which they want parcelled out among themselves.

An interesting feature of the original Nazi programme was a proposal to limit all salaries to 1200 marks per year, which is equivalent to Rs. 8,000, or Rs. 666 per month. I do not know how far this has been given effect to, but it appears that something is

being done. The present salary of the Chancellor is 26000 marks per year (=Rs. 1,000 per month). It is proposed that not even the directors or employers of private companies, which are subsidized by government, are to be paid a higher salary than 18000 marks per year, and these people have often been paid huge sums in the past. Compare these figures with the bloated salaries which poor India pays her officials. The Congress proposed at Karachi to fix the salary limit at Rs. 500 per month.

It must not be imagined that behind the Nazi movement there is only brutality and terror, prominent as that is. There is undoubtedly a very real enthusiasm for Hitler among large numbers of Germans, apart from the vast majority of the workers. If the figures of the last election are taken as a guide, he has 52 per cent. of the population behind him, and this 52 per cent. is terrorising the remaining 48 per cent. or part of it. With this 52 per cent., or perhaps more now, Hitler is very popular. People who go to Germany talk of a strange psychological atmosphere then, as of a religious revival, Germans feel that the long years of humiliation and suppression, caused by the Treaty of Versailles, are past and they can breathe freely again.

But the other half, or thereabouts, of Germany feels very differently. The German working class is dominated by an intense hatred and fury, bidden and controlled by fear of the terrible reprisals of the Nazis. They have submitted as a whole to force and terrorism, and seen with sorrow and despair the destruction of what they had built up with vast labour and sacrifice. Of all that has taken place during the last few months in Germany, not the least amazing has been the complete collapse of the great Social Democratic Party without the slightest effort to resist. This was the oldest, the biggest and the most highly organised party of the working class in Europe. It was the back bone of the Second International. And yet it submitted tamely and with hardly a protest—though protests alone would

have been singularly futile—to every insult and indignity and finally to extinction. Step by step the Social Democratic leaders submitted to the Nazis, hoping each time that their submission and humiliation might save them something at least. But their very submission was made a weapon against them and the Nazis pointed out to the workers how their leaders had basely deserted them when danger threatened. In the long history of struggle of the European working class there are some triumphs and many defeats, but never had there been such a disgraceful surrender and betrayal of the workers' cause without the least effort to resist. The Communist Party tried to resist and called for a general strike. They were not supported by the Social Democratic leaders and the strike fizzled out. Communists, though broken up, are still carrying on with a secret organisation which appears to be wide-spread. In spite of the Nazi spy system their secretly published newspaper is supposed to have a circulation of several hundred thousand. Some of the Social Democratic leaders who managed to escape from Germany are also trying to carry on some propaganda from abroad by secret methods.

The Working class was by far the greatest sufferer from the Brown terror. World opinion was however more agitated by the treatment of the Jews. Europe is partly used to class warfare and sympathy always goes along class lines. But the attack on the Jews was a racial attack, something of the kind which used to occur in the Middle Ages or, in recent times, unofficially, in backward countries like Tsarist Russia. The official persecution of a whole race shocked Europe and America. To add to the shock, the German Jews had among their number many world-famed men, brilliant scientists, doctors, lawyers, musicians and writers, topped by the great name of Albert Einstein. These people considered Germany their home and they were looked upon everywhere as Germans. Any country would have felt honoured by them, but the Nazis in their mad racial obsession, hunted them out and a

mighty outcry rose against this all over the world. Then the Nazis instituted a boycott of Jewish shops and professional men, and yet strangely enough they would not allow these Jews as a rule to leave Germany. The only result of such a policy must be starving them out. The world outcry made the Nazis tone down their public methods against the Jews but the policy continues.

But Jewry, although it is scattered all over the world and can call no nation its own, is not so helpless as not to be able to retaliate. It controls a great deal of business and finance and, quietly and without much fuss, it has proclaimed a boycott of German goods. And not only that but something more, as a resolution, passed in May, 1933, at a New York conference, declared. It was resolved "to boycott all goods, materials, or products manufactured, raised or improved in Germany, or any part thereof; all German shipping, freight, and traffic services, as well as all German health, pleasure, and other resorts, and generally to abstain from any act which would in any manner lend material support to the present régime in Germany". Pretty thorough! This world wide and powerful boycott by the Jews is a big affair, and Germany's economic position, already bad, is becoming far worse now.

This was one of the reactions of Hitlerism abroad; there were other reactions which were ever more far-reaching. The Nazis had all along denounced the Treaty of Versailles and demanded its revision, especially in the eastern frontier where there is the absurd arrangement of a Polish corridor to Danzig cutting off a bit of Germany from the rest of the country. They also loudly asked for complete equality in arming. (You may remember that they were largely disarmed by the Peace Treaty). Hitler's blood and thunder speeches and threats of re-arming upset Europe completely, especially France which had most to fear from a powerful Germany, and for some days Europe seemed to be on the brink of war. Suddenly this Nazi fear led to a

new grouping of Powers in Europe. France began to feel quite friendly towards Soviet Russia. Fearing a revision of the Treaty of Versailles, all the countries that had been created by it or had profited by it, like Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Yugoslavia and Rumania drew together, and at the same time drew nearer to Russia. In Austria a surprising situation arose. A fascist, Chancellor Dolfuss (a tiny person less than five feet in height) was already in control there but his brand of fascism was different from that of Hitler's. The Nazis are strong in Austria but Dolfuss has been fighting them. Italy welcomed Hitler's triumph but did not encourage all Hitler's ambitions. England, which for many years had been pro-German, suddenly became violently anti-German and people even began to talk again of 'Huns'. Hitler's Germany was quite isolated in Europe. It was obvious that a war would have meant a crushing of unarmed Germany by the powerful army of France. Hitler changed his tactics and began to talk in terms of peace and Mussolini came to his rescue by proposing a Four Power Pact between France, England, Germany and Italy.

This Pact was ultimately signed by the four Powers in June, 1933, though France hesitated before doing so. As far as the language of the Pact goes it is inoffensive enough and all it says is that the four Powers will consult each other in certain international matters, especially in regard to any proposal to revise the Treaty of Versailles. This Pact is looked upon, however, as an attempt to form an anti-Soviet block. France apparently signed it most unwillingly. Perhaps a result of and an answer to, this Pact had been the non-Aggression Pact which was signed in London on July 1, 1933, between the Soviet and her neighbours. It is interesting to notice that France has expressed her great sympathy and agreement with this Soviet Pact.

Hitler's fundamental programme, and it is the programme of German capitalism, is to pose as the champion of Europe against Soviet Russia. He knows

he cannot get much out of France; if Germany is to have more territory it can only get it in the east at the expense of the Soviet Union. Before this can be done Germany must be armed and it is therefore necessary to get the Treaty of Versailles revised to this effect or, at any rate, to have the assurance that nobody will interfere. Hitler counts on Italian support. If he can win over England's support also, it will be easy, so he probably hopes, to neutralise France's opposition in any discussions under the Four Power Pact. In any case it will be three against one.

Hitler is thus trying to win British support. In order to do so he has even publicly stated that it would be a calamity if the British hold on India was weakened. His anti-Sovietism is itself an attraction to the British government for, as I have told you, there is nothing that British imperialism dislikes quite so much as Soviet Russia. But the British people have been so disgusted with Nazi activities that it will take some time to win them over to any proposal involving an approval of Hitlerism.

Nazi Germany has thus become a storm centre in Europe, adding to the multitude of fears of this 'panic-stricken world'. What will happen in Germany itself? Will this Nazi régime last? There is plenty of hatred and opposition to the Nazis in Germany but it is clear enough that all organised opposition has been crushed. There is no party or organisation left in Germany and the Nazis are supreme. Among the Nazis themselves there appear to be two parties: the capitalist element and the business community forming the right wing, and the majority of the rank and file of the party, who have added to their number many workers who have recently joined them, forming the left wing. The people who gave the revolutionary urge to Hitler's movement had a great deal of anti-capitalist radicalism and they have subsequently accepted many socialists and marxists. The right wing and the left wing of the Nazi movement had little in common. Hitler's great success

consisted in keeping them together and playing one off against the other. This could be done so long as a common enemy was in sight. Now that the enemy has been crushed or absorbed the conflict between the right and left wing is bound to develop.

Already there are rumblings. The left wing Nazis demanded that the first revolution having been successfully completed, the 'Second Revolution' should now be begun, this being against capitalism, landlordism, etc. Hitler has, however, come down with a threat to suppress ruthlessly this 'Second Revolution'. So he has ranged himself definitely with the capitalist right wing. Most of his principal lieutenants now occupy high offices and, being comfortably installed, they are not eager for change. But what of the vast numbers of the unemployed and jobless people who had followed Hitler in the hope of getting something? A few thousand can be provided for but not millions. It is apparent that there is great discontent among the Nazis, and so long as this discontent lasts there can be no stability. Whether a 'Second Revolution' will take place in spite of Hitler it is impossible to say. And if such a crisis threatens there is always the possibility of Hitler creating an international crisis to divert people's attention from home.

This account of Hitlerism has been a long one, and this letter has become the longest that I have written. But you will agree that this Nazi triumph and its consequences have been most important for Europe and the world and may have far-reaching results. Undoubtedly it is fascism and Hitler himself is a typical fascist. But the Nazi movement has been something wider and more wide-spread and radical than Italian fascism was. Whether these radical elements will make any difference or will simply be crushed, remains to be seen.

To some extent orthodox marxist theory has been confounded by the growth of the Nazi movement. Orthodox marxists have believed that the only genuinely revolutionary class was the working class and as economic

conditions worsened this class would draw to itself the discontented and dispossessed elements of the lower middle class and ultimately bring about a workers revolution. As a matter of fact something very different has happened in Germany. The workers were far from revolutionary when the crisis came, and a new revolutionary class was formed chiefly from the dispossessed lower middle classes and other discontented elements. This does not fit in with orthodox marxism. But, say other marxists, marxism must not be looked upon as a dogma or religion or creed which authoritatively lays down the final truth as religions do. It is a philosophy of history, a way of looking at history which explains much and makes it hang together, and a method of action to achieve socialism or social equality. Its fundamental principles have to be applied in a variety of ways to meet the changing conditions of different times and different countries.

DISARMAMENT

August 2, 1933

I have told you of the failure of the World Economic Conference which met in London. The Conference has been wound up for the present and its members have gone home, expressing the pious hope that they might meet again under more favourable circumstances.

Another great failure at world efforts at co-operation has been the Disarmament Conference. This conference was the outcome of the Covenant of the League of Nations. The Treaty of Versailles had decided that Germany (as well as the other defeated Powers like Austria, Hungary) was to disarm. She could not keep a navy or air force or have a big army. It was also proposed that other countries should also gradually disarm so that armaments might be reduced everywhere to the lowest point consistent with national safety. The first part of the programme—German disarmament—was immediately enforced; the second part—general disarmament—remained, and still remains, a pious hope. It was to fulfil this second part of the programme that the Disarmament Conference was ultimately called nearly thirteen years after the Treaty of Versailles. But before the full conference met Preparatory Commissions explored the whole subject for years.

The World Disarmament Conference met at last early in 1932; it has now been in session, off and on, for a year and a half. If the number of proposals made, or the reports drawn up, or the interminable arguments, or the endless flow of oratory, if all this were any measure of success then the conference has indeed been a

brilliant success. Never before, I imagine, has there been so much preparation and talk about one subject continuously; never before, surely, have such mountains of papers containing minutes and reports accumulated in any conference. And yet no argument is reached. The conference goes on interminably day after day, for no Power wants to take the responsibility of breaking it. Yet break up it will, if something extraordinary does not occur; for the real difficulty lies in the fierce rivalries and conflicts of the present day world, and so long as these conflicts continue no Power dare weaken itself by disarming.

France, with past memories of German aggression, has always laid stress on 'security', on some arrangement which will make such aggression difficult, if not impossible. She has suggested that the League of Nations might itself keep an armed force to compel obedience from an aggressor nation. This would make the League a kind of Super-State and most countries are not prepared to agree to this. The League as constituted to-day is often criticised as being the tool of some of the Great Powers. To give additional power to such an organisation would mean adding to the strength of these Powers and enabling them to exploit others, ostensibly for international purposes but really for their own benefit. So runs the argument.

Each power brings forward a proposal before the conference which would result in weakening the other Powers relatively to itself. Naturally there is no agreement. Soviet Russia brought forward proposals which really went to the bottom of the whole question and which, if accepted, would have meant real disarmament everywhere. But the other Powers said this was not practical; it was an idealistic scheme which did not fit in with existing conditions. The real fact of the matter was that none of these other Powers want real disarmament; what they discuss is how to carry on with armaments, only with some minor alterations or reductions which might reduce expenditure. Nothing could

be more farcical than for these Powers to discuss disarmament solemnly at Geneva or Lausanne and for one of them, Japan, to carry on a bloody war in Manchuria, or for South American Republics to fight each other, or for Britain to continue bombing people at the Indian frontier.

If war is to be outlawed, as the Kellogg-Briand Pact said it was, why then should there be armaments? But none of the imperialist governments take such peace pacts seriously and they go on arming fiercely against each other. Even in the Kellogg Pact, you may remember, Britain made large reservations which took away all the force of it. Next to the Japanese, the British delegation at the Disarmament Conference has put the greatest difficulties in the way of the conference. It was the British delegation that was consistently friendly to the Japanese when the Japanese were openly defying the League in Manchuria. American opposition to Japanese aggression in China was largely neutralised by the British attitude.

Japan had taken refuge under the plea that she was not carrying on a 'war'; she was only undertaking some necessary 'operations'! To make it impossible for such extraordinary excuses to be advanced by any Power in future, it was proposed to define an 'aggressor' nation. Soviet Russia defined it, and then President Roosevelt, and lastly a committee of the League of Nations. All of these practically made it impossible for any country to send an armed force across the frontier to another country, or even to blockade the coast of another country, without incurring the penalty of becoming an 'aggressor' nation. Almost all the Powers, big and small, including France, agreed to this. The definition was very embarrassing for Japan! The real opposition to it however came from England supported by Italy. England refused to agree to this definition of 'aggressor' and wanted to leave the matter vague, which really meant that England did not want to give the League of Nations power to even intervene effectively in case

such aggression by a Power took place.

The recent non-Aggression Pact of Soviet Russia, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Rumania, Persia, Turkey, Afghanistan, Czecho-Slovakia and Yugo-Slavia accepts fully this comprehensive definition of 'aggressor'. France has also expressed her full agreement with this Pact. The only one of Russia's western neighbours that has not joined the Pact is Finland which is very much under British influence.

Another famous instance of British opposition in the Disarmament Conference has been their attitude towards bombing from aeroplanes. In spite of practically all other Powers (I cannot remember any other exceptions except Iraq, Britain's protege, and Holland) desiring the total abolition of such bombing, England has persisted in retaining what she calls 'police bombing'. Even as I write, the papers contain accounts of an aerial expedition across the north-west frontier of India and the bombing and destruction of villages by the British Royal Air Force.

After some months of vain efforts, the Disarmament Conference got stuck up hopelessly in a morass; it could neither go forward nor indeed come out of it. The economic crisis and trade depression was making it very difficult for all the Powers to continue to spend large sums on their armies and navies and air forces. They wanted to economise and this was a stronger inducement in favour of lessening armaments than even a desire for peace. And yet the imperialist Powers could not agree to anything. They were afraid of one another and they were afraid to some extent of the people they exploited in their empires. Empires are not built up on love and good-will; they have force and violence at their back and without this force the empire would vanish away.

One of the difficult problems before the Conference was that of Germany. Germany demanded equality with the other Powers; either she must be allowed to re-arm up to the limit allowed to others or the others

must disarm down to her limit. This was an unanswerable argument. Had not the League Covenant itself said that German disarmament was a prelude to others? Germany of course was no great lover of peace and disarmament, but she knew that all the Powers would never agree to any general scheme of disarmament and so, inevitably, they will have to agree to the German demand for equality and permission to arm. There was much sympathy for the German position and assurances of her right to equality were given her. And then came Hitler and the Nazis and their threats and aggressive attitude. Immediately the situation changed and France hardened and so also, to some extent, England and other Powers. If Nazi Germany is allowed to arm, she will be a terrible danger to Europe, so said the other Powers, and if we disarm that also will endanger peace. Any change in favour of Germany made France relatively weaker, and French nervousness could not contemplate this with any equanimity.

So matters stand and the Disarmament Conference is in this impasse and does not know how to get out of it. The danger of war has grown in Europe and no nation dare lessen its fighting forces. It keeps them up even if it has to save money from education and other essential services. An effective agreement to disarm is therefore very difficult. On the other hand if such an agreement is not arrived at, with what argument can German re-arming be stopped? And Nazi-German arming must lead to a swift war! Such is the fix of Europe! And it is with this background in view that one can understand the recent Four-Power Pact of Italy-Germany-England-France, which was just an attempt to prevent and postpone the conflict that was looming up ahead, and the Soviet non-Aggression Pact with her neighbours, which is an insurance against the war to come.

Meanwhile the Disarmament Conference is rapidly becoming a kind of Armament Conference. Not only does Germany periodically threaten to re-arm, but Japan

has quietly announced that she will increase her navy after a couple of years when her present agreement (arrived at in 1922 at the Washington Conference) with Britain, America and France, expires!

There are more than enough obvious difficulties in the way of the Disarmament Conference to prevent it from succeeding. To add to them, there are numerous intrigues behind the scenes, especially by the highly paid agents of armament firms. In the modern capitalist world the business of making arms and instruments of destruction is one of the most prosperous of industries. These arms are made for the governments of various countries, for only governments wage war as a rule, and yet, curiously enough, private firms make these arms. The principal owners of these firms grow enormously rich and they are usually in close touch with governments. I told you something about one such person, Sir Basil Zaharoff, in one of my earlier letters. Shares in armament concerns, bringing high dividends, are often sought after, and it was shown the other day that a large number of high officials in England, including cabinet ministers, and bishops and members of Parliament and other persons prominent in public life, are share-holders in these firms.

War and the preparation for war means profit to these armament firms. They traffic in wholesale death and, impartially, they sell their engines of destruction to all who may pay for them. When the League of Nations was condemning Japan for aggression in China, English and French and other armament firms were supplying arms freely to both Japan and China. It is obvious that real disarmament will mean ruin for these firms. Their trade will be gone. They try their best therefore to prevent what is, from their point of view, a catastrophe. Indeed they go further. A League of Nations Commission, specially appointed to enquire into the private manufacture of arms, came to the conclusion that these firms had been active in fomenting war scares and in persuading their own countries to adopt

war-like policies. It was also found that the firms spread false reports about military and naval expenditure of various countries so as to induce other countries into increasing their expenditure on armaments. They tried to play off one country against another and helped in promoting an armaments' race between them. They bribed government officials and brought up newspapers to influence public opinion. And then they formed international trusts and monopolies to increase the price of arms, etc. The League Commission suggested that the private manufacture of armaments should be stopped. This has been proposed in the Disarmament Conference also, but here again persistent opposition has come from the British government.

These armament firms of different countries are closely associated with each other. They exploit patriotism and play with death, and yet they are themselves international in their operations—the 'Secret International' they have been called. It is natural that these people should object strongly to disarmament and they have done their best to prevent any agreement. Their agents more in the highest diplomatic and political circles, and these sinister figures have been in evidence at Geneva, trying to pull the wires from behind the scenes.

Often closely allied with this 'Secret International' are the Intelligence Departments or Secret Services of various governments. Every government employs spies to get secret information from other countries. Sometimes the spies get caught and then they are promptly disowned by their own government! Referring to these secret services Arthur Ponsonby (who was some years ago, I think under Secretary for Foreign Affairs in the British government, and who is now Lord Ponsonby) said in May, 1927, in the House of Commons: "We must really face the facts, when we are getting on our high moral horse, that forgery, theft, lying, bribery and corruption, exist in every Foreign Office and every Chancellory of the world. . . . I say that according

to the recognised moral code our representatives abroad would be neglectful in their duty if they were not finding out secrets from the archives of those countries.

Because these Secret Services work in secret they are difficult to control. They influence the foreign policy of their respective countries greatly. They are wide-spread and powerful organisations. Probably the British Intelligence Service to-day is the most powerful and with the widest ramifications. There is an instance on record of a famous British spy becoming a high Soviet official in Russia! Sir Samuel Hoare, the present Secretary of State for India, was during war-time the head of the British Intelligence and Secret Service department in Russia, and he has recently stated publicly, with some pride, that his system of getting information was so good that he learnt of Rasputin's murder long before any one else did.

The real difficulty before the Disarmament Conference is that there are two classes of countries—the satisfied Powers and the unsatisfied Powers, the dominant Powers and those that are suppressed, the Powers that want the present state of affairs to continue and those that want a change. Between the two there can be no stable equilibrium, just as there can be no real stability between a dominant class and a suppressed class. The League of Nations represents on the whole the dominant Powers and so it tries to maintain the *status quo*. Security pacts and attempts to define an 'aggressor' nation are all meant to preserve existing conditions. Probably, whatever might happen, the League will never denounce one of the Powers that control it, as an 'aggressor'. It will always so manœuvre as to declare the other party as an 'aggressor'.

Pacifists and others who want to prevent war welcome these security pacts, and thereby in a sense they help in the maintenance of an unjust *status quo*. If this is so in Europe, much more is it so in Asia and Africa where imperialist Powers have annexed large portions of territory. The *status quo* thus in Asia and

Africa means the continuance of imperialist exploitation.

The United States of America have been, so far, free of any alliances or commitments in Europe regarding the maintenance of this *status quo*. But they seem to be getting a little mixed up with the European system now.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT TO THE RESCUE

August 4, 1933

I want you to have another look at the United States of America before I wind up this story (and the winding up cannot be long delayed now). A great and rather fascinating experiment is taking place there now and the world is on the watch, for on its results depends the future turn that capitalism will take. America, let me repeat, is by far the most advanced capitalist country; she is the wealthiest, and her industrial technique is ahead of the others. She owes money to no other country and her only debt is to her own citizens. Her export trade was considerable and growing and yet it was only a small part (about 15 per cent.) of her enormous internal trade. The country is nearly as big as the continent of Europe, but there is this big difference that Europe is cut up into a large number of little nations, each having high customs duties at its frontiers, while the United States have no such trade barriers within their own territories. It was thus far easier for a huge internal trade to develop in America than it was in Europe. America had all these advantages over the impoverished debt-ridden countries of Europe. She had plenty of gold, plenty of money, plenty of goods.

And yet, in spite of all this, the crisis of capitalism caught her and took all the pride out of her. Fatalism descended on a people whose vitality and energy knew no bounds. The country as a whole remained rich, money did not disappear but it piled up in a few places. Hundreds of millions were still in evidence in New York; the great banker J. Pierpont Morgan still sported his private luxury yacht which is reported to have cost

£ 6,000,000. And yet New York has been described recently as "Hunger Town". Great city municipalities like Chicago have been practically bankrupt, unable to pay the salaries of thousands of their employees. And this very Chicago is now running a magnificent exhibition or 'world fair' called 'The Century of Progress'.

These contrasts are not confined to America. Go to London and the overflowing wealth and luxury of the British upper classes is everywhere in evidence, except of course in the slums. Visit Lancashire or north or central England, or parts of Wales and Scotland, and you see long lines of unemployed, and pinched and haggard faces, and miserable living conditions.

A marked feature of recent years in America was the growth of crime, especially of the 'gangster' variety, that is gangs working together and frequently shooting people who came in their way. Crime is said to have increased greatly ever since a law was passed prohibiting the sale of intoxicating drinks. This 'prohibition', as it is called, became law soon after the World War, partly because the big employers wanted their workers to keep away from such drinks so that they might work better. But the rich themselves ignored the law and continued to get drinks illegally from abroad. Gradually an enormous illegal trade in alcoholic drinks was built up. "Bootlegging" this was called, and it consisted of both smuggling wines and spirits from abroad and of secretly manufacturing them. Usually this secretly manufactured stuff was far worse and more harmful than the real article. "Speak-easy" was the name for the place where such drinks could be bought at very high prices, and thousands of such private bars grew up in all the big cities. All this was of course illegal and to enable it to exist policemen and politicians were bribed and sometimes terrorised. This wide-spread contempt of the law led to the growth of the gangster groups. Thus 'prohibition' resulted on the one side in doing good to the workers and country people, on the other it did great harm and a very powerful boot-legging interest grew

up. The whole country was split up into two parties: those in favour of prohibition called the 'Drys', and those against it called the 'Wets'.

Among gangster crimes the most notorious and shocking were those of kidnapping little children of rich people and holding them for ransom. A year or two ago Lindbergh's baby son was so kidnapped and, to the world's horror, was brutally done to death.

All this, taken with the trade depression and the realisation that many of the high officials and big business people were corrupt and incompetent, upset the nerves of the American people. During the presidential election of November, 1932, they turned in their millions to Roosevelt, hoping that he would bring them relief. Roosevelt was a 'wet', and belonged to the Democratic Party which has very seldom provided presidents to the United States.

It is always interesting and helpful to compare different countries, always keeping in mind their distinctive features. One is tempted therefore to compare recent events in the United States with those in Germany and England. The comparison with Germany is a closer one because both countries, in spite of being highly industrialised, have a large farming population. Germany's farmers are 25 per cent. of her total population; in the United States they form 40 per cent. These farmers count in the making of national policy. Not so in England where the small proportion of farmers are neglected, although some effort is being made to revive them now.

One of the outstanding causes of the Nazi movement in Germany was the growth in numbers of the dispossessed lower middle classes and this growth became rapid after the German inflation. It was this class that became revolutionary in Germany. This is precisely the class which is growing in America now; it is called the 'white-collar proletariat' to distinguish it from the working class proletariat which seldom indulges in white collars.

Other comparisons are the currency crises, the fall of the mark, the pound and the dollar from gold and inflation, and bank failures. In England there have been no bank failures because there are not many small banks and four big banks control the banking business. In other respects the course of events in the three countries resemble each other; Germany having her crisis first, then England, then United States. Roughly the same class of people, in their respective countries, were behind the Nazis, the British National Government in the election in 1931, and President Roosevelt in his election in November, 1932. This was the lower middle class, many of whom had previously belonged to other parties. This comparison must not be taken too far, not only because of national differences but because the situation in England and America has not yet developed as it has in Germany. But the point is that very similar economic influences are at work in these three highly advanced industrial countries and the results they produce are therefore bound to be similar. This is not so in France (or other countries) to the same extent for France is still more agricultural and less advanced industrially.

Roosevelt took office as President early in March, 1933, and he was immediately faced by a tremendous banking crisis in addition to the great depression that was going on. Some weeks later he described the State of the country when he took office and he said that the country was "dying by inches" then.

Roosevelt took swift and decisive action. He asked the American Congress for powers to deal with banks, industry, and agriculture and the Congress, quite unnerved by the crisis, and influenced by popular feeling in favour of Roosevelt, gave him these powers. He became practically a dictator and everybody looked to him for immediate and effective action to save them from disaster. He did act with lightning rapidity and within a few weeks he had shaken up the whole of the United States by his various activities, and produced an even

greater feeling of confidence in himself.

Among President Roosevelt's many decisions were:

1. He went off gold and allowed the dollar to fall, thus reducing the burden on debtors. This was a measure of inflation.

2. Relieved farmers by subsidies, and got a huge loan of \$ 2,000,000,000 issued to relieve agriculture.

3. Enlisted 250000 workers immediately for forestry services and for flood control work. This was to relieve slightly unemployment.

4. He asked Congress for \$ 800,000,000 for unemployment relief. This was granted him.

5. He set aside the enormous sum of about \$ 3,000,000,000, which was to be borrowed, for public works to promote employment.

6. He hurried up the repeal of Prohibition.

All these enormous sums were to be obtained by borrowing from the rich people. Roosevelt's whole policy was and is to increase the buying power of the people; when they have the money they will buy and the trade depression will automatically lessen. It is with this object in view that he is having huge schemes of public works where the workers can be employed and earn money. It is also with this object that he is trying to raise the wages of workers and lessen their hours of work. A smaller working day would mean the employment of more people.

This attitude is in direct opposition to the usual attitude of employers during times of crisis and depression. Almost invariably they try to cut down wages and lengthen hours of work so as to cheapen their costs of production. But, says Roosevelt if we are to resume mass production of goods we must give the masses capacity to buy them by a mass distribution of high wages.

The Roosevelt government has also given a loan to Soviet Russia for the purpose of buying American cotton. The two governments are also discussing the possibilities of large-scale barter between the two

countries.

America has so far been a purely capitalistic state with full and unrestricted competition; an 'individualistic' state as it is called. Roosevelt's new policy does not fit in with this as he is interfering with business in a variety of ways. He is therefore practically introducing a great deal of state control over industry though he calls it by another name. It is really a measure of state socialism, regulating hours and conditions of labour, controlling industry and preventing 'cut-throat competition'. He has called it: "a partnership in planning, and seeing that plans are carried out."

This work is being carried on now with the usual American push and energy. Child labour has been abolished. (The child's age for this purpose is up to sixteen). Higher wages is the slogan, more pay, lesser hours of work. 'Prosperity Push' this campaign is called and the whole country, it is reported, has become a giant recruiting poster for this campaign. Aeroplanes dash about broadcasting appeals to employers and others. Each separate big industry is being induced to draw up 'codes' fixing higher wages, etc., and pledging themselves to carry them out; if they fail to draw up a suitable code there is the gentle threat that the government will do it for them. Individual employers are asked to sign pledge forms promising to raise wages and shorten the hours of work of their employees. To those employers who take a lead in this matter the government proposes to give badges of honour, and, to shame slackers, a roll of honour will be kept in the post office of every town.

All this has resulted in some improvement in prices and trade. But the real improvement which is marked, is in business sentiment and morale. The feeling of defeat has largely gone and there is, among the large masses of the people, and especially the middle classes, and abounding faith in President Roosevelt. He is compared already to America's great hero, President Lincoln, who also took office at a time of a great crisis, the Civil

War.

Even in Europe many people began to look up to him and expected a world leadership against the depression. But at the World Economic Conference he became rather unpopular with the delegates of other countries because he directed his representatives to refuse to fix up the dollar in terms of gold, or to agree to anything else which might interfere with his great schemes in the United States.

Roosevelt's policy is definitely one of economic nationalism and he is bent on improving conditions in America. Some European governments do not like it, and bankers, and especially French bankers, are particularly annoyed because their gold standard is endangered. The English are watching him closely.

And yet Roosevelt is taking a more active part in world affairs than his predecessor did. On the question of disarmament and other international questions, he has taken up a definite and more advanced attitude than that of England. His polite warning to Hitler made Hitler tone down. He is also getting into touch with Soviet Russia.

The great question in America to-day, and even elsewhere, is: will Roosevelt succeed? He is making a brave attempt to keep capitalism going. But his success means the dethronement of Big Business and it is far from likely that Big Business will take this lying down. American Big Business is held to be the most powerful vested interest in the modern world, and it is not going to give up its power and privileges merely at the bidding of President Roosevelt. For the present it is quiet for public opinion and the president's popularity have rather overwhelmed it. But it is waiting for its opportunity. If there is no great improvement within a few months, public opinion, it is expected, will turn against Roosevelt and then Big Business will come out into the open.

Many competent observers think that President Roosevelt is facing an impossible task and that he cannot

succeed. His failure will make the world slump worse, and in America it will make Big Business supreme again and with perhaps even greater power than before. For Roosevelt's state socialism apparatus will then be utilised for the private profit of Big Business. The labour movement is not strong in America and can easily be squashed.

Another view is that America (and perhaps England too) will follow the way of Germany and the fascist tendencies will increase. Roosevelt's policy of inflation, though profiting many sections, is hitting the middle classes with fixed incomes and salaries hard for they continue to receive the same salaries while the dollar falls in the white-collar proletariat grows and becomes far more revolutionary than the workers. These middle class revolutionary elements combining with the farmer class may produce fascist conditions in America. This does not mean that German conditions will be reproduced. But there is likely to be a harsher treatment of the poor Negro, perhaps less tolerance of foreign elements and Jews, and more repression, like the suppression of civil liberties, free speech and press, etc. Roosevelt himself is a far more liberal and cultured president than America has had since Woodrow Wilson. But he seems to represent forces which, as the crisis develops, may turn more and more to fascism. For the present, however, he is practically the dictator of the United States and he is trying his utmost to pull up those who are down and the world watches his great experiment.

THE FAILURE OF PARLIAMENTS

August 6, 1933

We have examined recent events in some detail and considered many forces and tendencies that are shaping our changing world to-day. Among the facts that stand out there are two, which I have already mentioned but which will bear further consideration. These two are: the failure of labour and the old type of socialism during the post-war years, and the failure or decline of parliaments.

I have told you how organised labour failed and the Second International went to pieces when the World War broke out in 1914. This was explained by the sudden shock of war when fierce national passions are aroused and a temporary madness takes possession of peoples. Something very different and even more revealing has happened during the last four years. These four years have seen the greatest slump that the capitalist world has ever known and they have in consequence brought ever increasing misery on the workers. And yet this has not resulted in creating a real revolutionary sentiment among the masses of the workers generally everywhere, and especially in England and the United States.

The old type of capitalism is obviously breaking down. Objectively, that is so far as external facts are concerned, conditions seem to be fully ripe for a change to a socialist economy. But the great majority of the very people who might have desired this most, the workers, have no will to revolution. Revolutionary sentiments are far more in evidence among the conservative farmers of America and, as I have repeatedly

told you, among the lower middle classes in most countries, who are far more aggressive than the workers. This is most in evidence in Germany, but to a lesser degree it is to be seen in England, the United States, and elsewhere. The differences in degree are due to national characteristics as well as to various stages in the development of the crisis.

Why has labour, which was so aggressive and revolutionary in the early post-war years, become so quiescent and resigned to any fate that may be in store for it? Why did the German Social Democratic Party break down without a struggle and allow itself to be shattered by the Nazis? Why is English labour so moderate and reactionary? and even more so American labour? Labour leaders are often blamed for their incompetence for their betrayal of the interests of the working class. Many of them no doubt deserve this blame and it is sad to find them turning renegades and making the Labour Movement a stepping stone to gratify personal ambition. Opportunism there is unhappily in every department of human activity; but the opportunism which exploits the hopes and ideals and sacrifices of the down-trodden and suffering millions for personal advantage, is one of the greatest of human tragedies.

Leaders may be to blame. But leaders are after all the products of existing conditions. A country usually gets the rulers it deserves and a movement the leaders which in the final analysis represent its real wishes. In reality neither the leaders of labour nor their followers in these imperialistic countries looked upon socialism as a living creed, something to be desired immediately. Their socialism got too much entangled and bound up with the capitalistic system. The exploitation of colonial countries brought them a small share in the profits and they looked to the continuance of capitalism for a higher standard of life. Socialism became a distant ideal, a kind of heaven to dream of, a hereafter, not the present. And like the old idea of heaven, it became a

handmaid of capital.

And so Labour Parties, Trade Unions, Social Democrats, the Second International, and all similar organisations pottered away at petty attempts to reform leaving the whole structure of capitalism intact. Their idealism left them and they became huge bureaucratic organisations without a soul and with little real strength.

The new Communist Party was differently situated. It had a message for the worker which was more vital, more appealing, and behind it the attractive background of the Soviet Union. But even so it had singularly little success. It failed to get the labour masses in Europe or America. In England and the United States it was amazingly weak. In Germany and in France it had some strength, and yet we have seen how little it could profit by it in Germany at least. Internationally its two great defeats have been in China in 1927 and in Germany in 1933. Why did the Communist Party fail during these days of trade depression and repeated crisis and low wages and unemployment? It is difficult to say. Some say that it was just bad tactics, wrong methods of work. Others suggest that the Party was too much bound down to the Soviet government and its policy was thus more a national policy for the Soviet than an international policy as it should have been. This may be so but it is hardly a satisfactory explanation.

The Communist Party as such did not grow among the workers but communist ideas spread widely, especially among intellectual classes. Everywhere, even among the supporters of capitalism, there was an expectation, a fear, that the crisis might lead inevitably to some form of communism. It was generally recognised that the old type of capitalism had had its day. This acquisitive economy, this policy of individual grab, with no planning, with its waste and conflicts and periodical crises, must go. In its place some form of planned socialistic economy or co-operative economy

must be established. This does not mean necessarily the victory of the working class for a state may be organised on semi-socialistic lines for the benefit of the owning classes. A state socialism and a state capitalism are much the same thing; the real question is who is in command in the state and who profits by it, the whole community or a particular possessing class.

While intellectuals argued, the lower middle classes, or the petty bourgeoisie, in the western industrial countries took action. These classes felt vaguely that capitalism and capitalists exploited them and felt some resentment against them. But they were far more afraid of the working class and of communism taking command. Capitalists usually made terms with this fascist wave as they felt that there was no other way of stopping communism. Gradually almost everybody who was afraid of communism allied himself to this fascism. In this way, to a greater or less extent, fascism spreads wherever capitalism is in danger and faces communism, or the possibility of it. Between the two, parliamentary government goes to pieces.

And this leads us to the second outstanding fact which I mentioned at the beginning of this letter—the failure or decline of parliaments. I have already told you a good deal in previous letters about dictatorships and the failure of old-style democracy. This is obvious enough in Russia, Italy, Central Europe and now in Germany where parliamentary government had collapsed even before the Nazis seized power. In the United States we have seen how Congress has given the fullest powers to President Roosevelt and made him practically a dictator. This process is evident even in France and England, the two countries of Europe with the longest and most stable tradition of democracy. Let us consider England's case.

The English way of doing things is very different from the continental method. Always they try to keep up old appearances and the changes are thus not very obvious. To an ordinary observer the British Parliament

continues as before but as a matter of fact it has changed greatly. In the old days the House of Commons exercised power directly and the average member had a good say in the matter. Now it is the Cabinet or the Government that decides every big question and the House of Commons can only say yes or no to it. Of course the House can turn out the Government by saying no but this is a drastic step which is seldom taken as it would result in a lot of trouble and a general election. So that if a government has got a majority in the House of Commons, it can do almost anything it likes and get the House to agree to it and thus make it law. Power has thus been transferred, and is still being transferred, from the legislature to the executive.

Again, there is so much work to be done by Parliament now-a-days, so many complicated questions to be faced, that a practice has grown for Parliament to decide only general principles of any measure or law and to leave it to the executive government, or to some department of it, to fill in the details. In this way the executive has got enormous powers and can do what it likes in an emergency. Parliament thus is getting more and more out of touch with important activities of the state. Its chief functions are now being reduced to criticism of government measures, questions and enquiries, and finally approval of the general policy of government. As Harold J. Laski, a well-known writer says: "Our Government has become an executive dictatorship tempered by fear of Parliamentary revolt."

The sudden fall of the Labour Government in September (or perhaps October) 1931 was brought about in a curious way which shows how little Parliament had to do with the matter. Ordinarily a government in England falls because it is defeated in the House of Commons. In 1931 nothing came before the House; no one knew what was happening, not even most of the members of the Cabinet itself. The prime minister, Ramsay MacDonald, had some secret conversations with

leaders of other parties; they saw the King, and the old Cabinet suddenly disappeared and a new one was announced in the newspapers! Some of the members of the old Cabinet learnt of all this for the first time from these newspapers. All this was an extraordinary and most undemocratic method of procedure, and the fact that the House of Commons ultimately ratified it does not alter this fact. This was the method of dictatorship.

The Labour Government thus overnight gave place to a 'National Government' in which the Conservative and Liberal Parties joined Ramsay MacDonald who continued as Prime Minister. 'National Government' simply means a government in which the possessing classes, the owners of property all sink their differences and join together to fight socialistic changes. Such governments come into existence when there is fear that such changes may be too far-reaching and might shake the position of the owning classes, or cast too great a burden on them. Such a position arose in England in September, 1931, when the crisis came which later drove the pound from gold, and the reaction to this was the consolidation of the forces of capitalism against socialism. By playing upon the fears of the middle class masses that all their savings would go if Labour won, the National Government thoroughly frightened this petty bourgeoisie and got returned by a tremendous majority. MacDonald and his supporters said that the only alternative to the National Government was communism. As a matter of fact the British Labour Party is an eminently moderate, respectable body, more afraid of communism than of anything else.

Thus in England also old-time democracy has broken down and Parliament is on the decline. Democracy fails when vital issues which move peoples passions, have to be faced, such as religious clashes, or national and racial (Aryan German *versus* Jew), and above all economic (between the Haves and the Have-Nots).

You will remember that when such a religious-national issue arose in Ireland between Ulster and the rest in 1914, the British Conservative Party actually refused to accept Parliament's decision and even encouraged Civil War. Thus so long as an apparently democratic procedure serves the purposes of the possessing classes they use it to their advantage to protect their own interests. When this comes in their way and challenges these special privileges and interests, then they discard democracy and take to methods of dictatorship. It is quite possible that the British Parliament may in the future get a majority in favour of sweeping social changes. If such a majority attacks vested interests, the owners of these interests may repudiate Parliament itself and even encourage revolt against its decision, as they did in 1914 over the Ulster issue.

So we see that parliament and democracy are only considered desirable by the possessing classes so long as they maintain existing conditions. That of course is not real democracy; it is the exploitation of the democratic idea for undemocratic purposes. Real democracy has had no chance to exist so far for there is an essential contradiction between the capitalist system and democracy. Democracy, if it means anything, means equality; not merely the equality of possessing a vote but economic and social equality. Capitalism means the very opposite: a few people holding economic power and using this to their own advantage. They make laws to keep their own privileged position secure, and anybody who breaks these laws becomes a disturber of law and order whom society must punish. Thus there is no equality under this system and the liberty allowed is only within the limits of capitalist laws meant to preserve capitalism.

The conflict between capitalism and democracy is inherent and continuous; it is often hidden by misleading propaganda and by the outward forms of democracy, such as parliaments; and the sopps that the owning classes throw to the other classes to keep them more or less contented. A time comes when there are no more

sops left to be thrown, and then the conflict between the two groups comes to a head, for now the struggle is for the real thing, economic power in the state. When that stage comes all the supporters of capitalism, who had so far played with different parties, band themselves together to face the danger to their vested interests. Liberals and such like groups disappear and the forms of democracy are put aside. This stage has now arrived in Europe and America, and fascism, which is dominant in some form or other in most countries, represents that stage. Labour is everywhere on the defensive, not strong enough to face this new and powerful consolidation of the forces of capitalism. And yet, strongly enough the capitalist system itself totters and cannot adjust itself to the new world. It seems certain that even if it succeeds in surviving, it will do so in a greatly changed and a harsher form. And this of course will be but another stage in the long conflict. For modern industry and modern life itself, under any form of capitalism, are battlefields where armies are continually clashing against each other.

Some people imagine that all this trouble and conflict and misery could be avoided if a few sensible persons were in charge of various governments, and that it is the folly or knavery of politicians and statesmen that is at the bottom of everything. They think that if good people would but get together they could convert the wicked by moral exhortations and pointing out to them the error of their ways. This is a very misleading idea, for the fault does not lie with individuals but with a wrong system. So long as that system endures these individuals must act in the way they do. Groups that occupy dominant or privileged position, either foreign national groups governing another nation, or economic groups within a nation, convince themselves by an amazing self-deception and hypocrisy that their special privileges are a just reward of merit. Any one who challenges this position seems to them a knave and a scoundrel and an upsetter of settled conditions.

It is impossible to convince a dominant group that its privileges are unjust and that it should give them up peacefully. Individuals may sometimes be so convinced, though rarely, but groups never. And so, inevitably, come clashes and conflicts and revolution, and infinite suffering and misery.

A FINAL LOOK ROUND THE WORLD

August 7, 1933

Of the writing of letters there is no end so long as pen and paper and ink hold out. And of writing on world happenings also there is no end for this world of ours rolls on, and the men and women and children in it laugh and weep, and love and hate and fight each other unceasingly. It is a story that goes on and on and has no ending. And in the to-day that we live, life seems to be flowing faster than ever, its tempo is swifter, and changes come rapidly one after the other. Even as I write it changes and what I write to-day may be out of date, distant, and perhaps out of place, tomorrow. The river of life is never still; it flows on and sometimes, as now, it rushes forward, pitilessly, with a demon energy, ignoring our little wills and desires, making cruel mock of our petty selves, and tossing us about like straws on its turbulent waters, rushing on and on no one knows whither—to a great precipice which will shatter it into a thousand bits, or to the vast and inscrutable, stately and calm, ever-changing and yet changeless sea.

I have written already far more than I ever intended or than I ought to have done. My pen has run on. We have finished our long wandering and have completed the last long stage. We have reached to-day and stand on the threshold of tomorrow, wondering what it will be like when it also, in its turn, becomes to-day. Let us pause a little and look round the world. How does it stand on this seventh day of August nineteen hundred and thirty-three?

In India Bapu has again been arrested and sentenced

and is back in Yervada Prison. Civil Disobedience has been resumed, though in a restricted form, and our comrades go to jail again. A brave and dear comrade, a friend whom I first met a quarter of a century ago when I was new at Cambridge, Jatindra Mohan Sen-Gupta, has just left us, dying as a prisoner of the British Government. Life merges in death, but the great work to make life worth living for the people of India goes on. Many thousands of India's sons and daughters, the most spirited and often the most gifted, lie in prison or internment camps, spending out their youth and energy in conflict against the existing system which enslaves India. All this life and energy might have gone in a building up, in construction; there is so much to be done in this world. But before the construction must come destruction, so that the ground may be cleared for the new structure. We cannot put up a fine building over on top of the mud walls of a hovel. The state of India to-day can best be appreciated by the fact that in certain parts of India in Bengal, even the manner of dress is regulated by government order and to dress otherwise means prison. And in Chittagong even little boys (and presumably little girls also) of twelve and upwards have to carry about identity cards with them wherever they might go. I do not know if such an extraordinary order has ever been enforced elsewhere, even in Nazi-ridden Germany, or in a war area occupied by enemy troops. We are indeed a ticket-of-leave nation to-day under British rule. And across our north-west frontier our neighbours are being bombed by British aeroplanes.

Our fellow countrymen in other countries have little honour shown to them; they are seldom made welcome anywhere. And this is not surprising, for how can they have honour elsewhere when they have no honour at home? They are being turned out of South Africa where they were born and bred, and some parts of which, especially in Natal, they had built up with their labour. Colour prejudice, racial hatred, economic

conflict, all combine to make these Indians in South Africa castaways with no home or refuge. They must be shipped away to some other place, to British Guiana, or back to India, where they can but starve, or anywhere else, says the government of the Union of South Africa, so long as they leave South Africa for good.

In East Africa, Indians have played a great part in building up Kenya and the surrounding territories. But they are no longer welcome there; not because the Africans object, but because the handful of European planters object to them. The best areas, the high lands, are reserved for these planters and neither African nor Indian may possess land there. The poor Africans are far worse off. Originally all the land was in their possession and was their only source of income. Huge areas of this were confiscated by the government and free grants of land were made to the European settlers. These settlers or planters are thus big land-holders there now. They paid no income-tax and hardly any other tax. Almost the whole burden of taxation falls on the poor down-trodden African. It was not easy to tax the African for he possesses next to nothing. A tax was put on some necessities of life for him, like flour and clothing, and indirectly he had to pay it when he bought them. But the most extraordinary tax of all was a direct hut and poll tax on every male over sixteen years old and his dependents, which included women. The principle of taxation is that people should be taxed out of what they earn or possess. As the African possessed practically nothing else his body was taxed! But how was he to pay this poll tax of twelve shillings per person per year if he had no money? Therein lay the craftiness of this tax, for it forced him to earn some money by working in the plantations of the European settlers, and thus paying the tax. It was a device not only to get money but also cheap labour for the plantations. So these unhappy Africans sometimes have to travel enormous distances, coming from the interior 700 or 800 miles away to the plantations near the coast

(there are no railways in the interior and just a few near the coast), in order to earn wages to pay their poll tax.

There is so much more that I could tell you of these poor exploited Africans who do not even know how to make their voices heard by the outside world. Their tale of misery is a long one, and they suffer in silence. Driven off from their best lands, they had to return to them as tenants of the Europeans, who got the land free at the expense of these Africans. These European landlords are semi-feudal masters and every kind of activity which they dislike has been suppressed. The Africans cannot form any association even to advocate reforms as the collection of any money is forbidden. There is even an Ordinance proscribing dancing because the Africans sometimes mimicked and made fun of European ways in their songs and dances! The peasantry is very poor and they are not allowed to grow tea or coffee because this would compete with the European planters.

Three years ago the British Government solemnly announced that they were trustees for the African and that in future he would not be deprived of his lands. Unfortunately for the Africans gold was discovered in Kenya last year. The solemn promise was forgotten; the European planters made a rush for this land, turned out the African farmers, and started digging for gold. So much for British promises. We are told that all this will eventually work out for the advantage of the Africans and that they are quite happy at losing their lands!

This capitalist method of exploiting a gold-bearing area is most extraordinary. People are actually made to run for it from a prescribed place and each one takes possession of part of the area and then works it. Whether he finds much gold or not in that particular bit depends on his luck. This method is typical of capitalism. The obvious way to deal with a gold field seems to be for the government of the country to take possession of it and work it for the advantage of the

whole state. This is what the Soviet Union is doing with its gold fields in Tadjikistan and elsewhere.

I have said something about Kenya in this final survey of ours and because we have ignored Africa in these letters. Remember it is a vast continent full of the African races who have been cruelly exploited by foreigners for hundreds of years, and are still exploited. They are terribly backward but they have been kept down and not given the chance to go ahead. Where this chance has been given them, as recently at a university founded on the West Coast, they have made remarkable progress.

Of the countries of West Asia I have told you enough. There, and in Egypt, the struggle for freedom goes on in various forms and in various stages. So also in south-east Asia, in Further India and Indonesia—Siam, Indo-China, Java, Sumatra and the Dutch Indies, the Philippine Islands. And everywhere, except Siam which is independent, the struggle has two aspects: the nationalist urge against foreign domination and the urge of the down-trodden classes for social equality or at least economic betterment.

In the Far East of Asia, Giant China lies helpless before her aggressors and is torn by internal dissension into many bits. One face of it is turned to commission and another is turned violently away from it, and meanwhile Japan marches forward, almost inexorably, and establishes her hold on large areas of Chinese territory. But China has survived many a mighty invasion and danger in the long course of her history, and there is little doubt that she will survive the Japanese invasion.

Imperialist Japan semi-feudal, military-ridden, and yet industrially highly advanced, a strange mixture of the past and the present, nurses ambitious dreams of world empire. But behind these dreams lie the reality of threatening economic collapse and terrible misery for her teeming population, which is shut out from America and the vast uninhabited spaces of Australia.

And a tremendous check to these dreams also lies in the hostility of the United States, the most powerful of modern nations. Soviet Russia is another powerful check to Japanese expansion in Asia. In Manchuria and over the deep waters of the Pacific Ocean many keen-eyed observers can already see the approaching shadow of a great war.

The whole of North Asia is part of the Soviet Union and is absorbed in planning and building a new world and a new social order. It is strange that these backward countries that civilization had left behind in its march, and where a kind of feudalism still prevailed, should have jumped forward to a stage which is ahead of the advanced nations of the west. The Soviet Union in Europe and Asia stands to-day a continuing challenge to the tottering capitalism of the western world. While trade depression and slump and unemployment and repeated crises paralyse capitalism and the old order gasps for breath, the Soviet Union is a land full of hope and energy and enthusiasm, feverishly building away and establishing the socialist order. And this abounding youth and life, and the success the Soviet has already achieved, is impressing and attracting thinking people all over the world.

The United States of America, another vast area, are typical of the failure of capitalism. In the midst of great difficulties, crises, labour strikes, and unexampled unemployment, they are making a brave effort to pull together and preserve the capitalist system. The result of this great experiment remains to be seen. But whatever that may be, nothing can take away from America the great advantages that she possesses in her wide territories, rich in almost everything that man requires, and in her technical resources, which are greater than those of any other country, and in her skilled and highly-trained people. The United States, as also the Soviet Union, are bound to play a vastly important part in the world affair of the future.

And the great continent of South America with its

Latin nations so entirely different from the north? Unlike the north, there is little racial prejudice here and a great melting of different races—southern Europeans: Spanish, Portuguese, Italians and Negroes and the so-called Red Indians, the original inhabitants of the American continents. These Red Indians have almost died out in Canada and the United States, but here in the South they still exist in large numbers, especially in Venezuela. They live mostly away from the great cities. You may be surprised to learn, that some of these South American cities, like Buenos Ayres and Rio de Janeiro, are not only very big but very beautiful with magnificent boulevards. Buenos Ayres, the capital of Argentine, has a population of two and a half millions, and Rio de Janeiro, the capital of Brazil, has nearly two millions.

Although there is a melting of races, the governing classes belong to the white ruling aristocracy. The clique or group that controls the army and police usually governs and, as I have told you, there have been frequent revolutions at the top. All the South American countries have abundant mineral resources and are thus potentially very rich. But meanwhile they are sunk in debt, and as soon as the United States stopped lending money to them four years ago, they got into a hopeless muddle, and there were revolutions all over the place. The three chief countries, the A, B, C countries as they are called, Argentine, Brazil and Chile also succumbed to revolutions, owing to financial difficulties.

Since the summer of 1932 South America has had two little wars of its own but, like the Japanese war in Manchuria, they are not officially called wars. Ever since the League of Nations covenant and the Kellogg Peace Pact and other pacts, wars hardly occur. When one nation invades another and kills its citizens, this is called a 'conflict', and as a conflict is not prohibited by the pacts everybody is happy! These little wars have no world importance, as the Manchurian one had, but they serve to prove how weak and futile the whole

much-vaunted peace machinery of the world is, from the League of Nations to the numerous pacts and agreements. One member of the League invades another member and the League sits helplessly by, or makes feeble and utterly useless efforts to settle the quarrel.

One of these wars or 'conflicts' in South America is between Bolivia and Paraguay over a piece of jungle territory called the Chako. A witty Frenchman has said that "the struggle between Bolivia and Paraguay over the Chako jungle reminds me of two bald-headed men fighting for a comb." The struggle is but it is not quite so silly as this. There are oil interests involved in this vast jungle territory, and the river Paraguay, which runs through it, connects Bolivia with the Atlantic Ocean. The two countries have refused to compromise and have sacrificed thousands of lives already.

The other conflict is between Columbia and Peru over a little village named Laticia, which Peru seized very improperly. I think that Peru was even strongly criticised by the League of Nations. I have an idea that this struggle has now been settled.

Latin America (and this includes Mexico) is Catholic in religion. In Mexico violent conflicts have taken place between the State and the Catholic priests. As in Spain, the Mexican government wanted to curb the great power of the Roman Church in education and in almost everything.

The language of South America is Spanish, except in Brazil where Portuguese is the official language. Because of this enormous area where it flourishes, Spanish is to-day one of the greatest of world languages—probably in point of numbers it will come after English. It is a beautiful and sonorous language, with a fine modern literature, and now, because of South America, it is a commercial language of great importance.

THE SHADOW OF WAR

August 8, 1933

In our last letter we surveyed rapidly the continents of Asia, Africa and the Americas. Europe remains, troublesome and quarrelsome Europe, and yet possessing many virtues.

England, so long the leading world Power, has lost her old supremacy and is trying hard to hold on to what remains. Her sea-power which gave her security and dominance over others and enabled her to build up her empire, is no longer what it was. There was a time, not so long ago, when her navy was bigger and more powerful than that of any two great Powers. To-day it claims equality only with that of the United States and, in case of need, the United States have the resources to out-build England rapidly. Even more important than sea-power is air-power to-day, and in this respect England is weaker still; there are several powers which have more fighting aeroplanes than she has. Her trade supremacy is also gone without hope of recovery and her great export trade progressively declines. By means of high tariffs and preferences she is trying to preserve the Empire market for her goods. This in itself means a giving up of ambitious ideas of world trade outside the Empire. Even if success comes to her in this more limited sphere, it does not bring back to her the old supremacy. That is gone for ever. Even the limited success within the Empire is of doubtful extent and duration.

England is still, after her fierce duel with America, the financial centre of world trade and the city of London is the central exchange for it. But this prize is

losing all its lustre and its value as world trade shrinks and disappears. England and other countries, by their policies of economic nationalism, tariffs, etc., are themselves helping in this shrinkage of world trade. Even if a large measure of world trade continues and the present capitalist system endures, there can be no doubt that the financial leadership of it will eventually shift to New York from London. But very probably before that happens vast changes will have taken place in the capitalist system.

England has a reputation for adapting herself to changing circumstances. The reputation is justified so long as her social basis receives no shock and her possessing classes retain their privileged position. Whether this capacity for adaptation will carry her through fundamental social changes has still to be seen. It is highly unlikely that such a change will be quietly and peacefully effected. Those who have power and privilege do not give them up willingly.

Meanwhile England is shrinking from the bigger world to her empire, and to preserve this Empire she has agreed to great changes in its structure. The Dominions have a measure of independence though they are tied in many ways to the British financial system. England has sacrificed much to please her growing Dominions and yet conflicts arise between them. Australia is bound hand and foot to the Bank of England, and fear of Japanese invasion keeps her closely tied to England; Canada's growing industries compete with some of England's and refuse to give in to them, and Canada has also numerous associations with her neighbour, the United States; in South Africa there is no great sentiment in favour of the Empire though the old bitterness has now gone. Ireland stands by herself and the Anglo-Irish trade war is still going on. The English duties on Irish goods, which were meant to frighten and coerce Ireland into submission, have had a contrary effect. They have given a tremendous push to Irish industries and agriculture and Ireland is succeeding in becoming to

a large extent a self-reliant and self-sufficient nation. Fresh factories have sprung up and grass land is again becoming corn land; tillage is becoming back. The food that used to be exported to England is now consumed by the people and their standards are rising. De Valera has thus triumphantly vindicated his policy, and Ireland to-day is a thorn in British Imperial policy, aggressive, defiant, and not fitting in at all with the Ottawa deals.

England thus does not stand to gain much by her trade associations with her Dominions. She could gain much from India for India still offers a vast market. But political conditions in India, as well as economic distress, are not favourable to British trade. By sending people to jail one cannot force them to buy British goods. Mr. Stanley Baldwin said recently in Manchester:

"The day when we could dictate to India and tell her when and where to buy her goods was gone. The safeguard for trade was good-will. We should never sell goods to India by cotton streamers on the end of a bayonet."

Apart from internal conditions in India, England has to face fierce Japanese competition here and elsewhere in the East and in some of the Dominions.

So England is trying hard to hold on to what she has got by making of her Empire an economic unit, and adding to this such other small countries as come to terms with her, such as Denmark or the Scandinavian countries. This policy is being forced on her by the very logic of events; there is no other way. Even to protect herself in war she must be more self-contained. She is therefore developing her agriculture now also. How far this imperial policy of economic nationalism will succeed no one can say now. I have suggested many difficulties in its way which will come in the way of success. If failure comes then the whole structure of Empire must collapse and the English people have to face a much lower standard of living. But even the success of the policy is full of dangers for it may result in the ruin of many European countries, whose trade will thus

not have a sufficient outlet, and the bankruptcy of England's debtors will in its turn do harm to England's position.

Economic conflicts are also bound to arise against Japan and America. With the United States there is rivalry in many fields and, as the world stands to-day, the United States, with their vast resources, must go ahead while England declines. This process can only lead to a quiet acceptance of defeat in the struggle by England, or to the risk of war to make a final effort to save what she has before that too goes and she is too weak to challenge her rivals.

Yet another great rival of England is the Soviet Union. They stand for diametrically opposite policies and they glare at each other and intrigue against each other all over Europe and Asia. The two Powers may live at peace with each other for a while but it is quite impossible to reconcile the two for they stand for wholly different ideals. If a great conflict is to come between them, England would not like to see it delayed for too long for the Soviet's strength grows year by year. Russia would rather postpone the final settlement for a few years till she is stronger and fully prepared.

England is a satisfied Power to-day because she has got all she wants. Her fear is that she will lose this and the fear is justified. She tries hard to maintain the *status quo*, and thereby her present position by using the League of Nations for this purpose. But events are too strong for her or for any Power. Undoubtedly she is strong to-day but equally undoubtedly (or is it that the wish is father to the thought?) she weakens and declines as an imperialist Power and we are witnessing the evening of her great Empire.

Crossing over the Continent of Europe, there is France, also an imperialist Power with a great Empire in Africa and Asia. In a military sense she is the most powerful nation in Europe. She has a mighty army and she is the leader of a group of other nations: Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Belgium, Rumania, Yugo-Slavia. And

yet she fears the militant spirit of Germany, especially since the Hitler régime. Hitler has indeed succeeded in bringing about a remarkable change of feelings between capitalist France and Soviet Russia. A common enemy has made them quite friendly to each other.

In Germany the Nazi Terror still continues and reports of new cruelties and atrocities come daily. How long this brutality will continue it is impossible to say; it has already lasted five months and there is no abatement of it. Such repression can never be the sign of a stable government. Probably if Germany had been strong enough in a military sense there would have been a war already in Europe. This war may yet come. Hitler is fond of saying that he is the last refuge from communism and this may be true, for the only alternative to Hitlerism in Germany now is communism.

Italy, under Mussolini, takes a very cold matter of fact and selfish view of international politics and does not indulge in pious phrases about peace and good-will, as other nations do. She prepares for war strenuously, for she is convinced that war is bound to come before long, and meanwhile she manœuvres for position. Being fascist she welcomes fascism in Germany and keeps on friendly terms with the Hitlerites; and yet she opposes the great aim of German policy—the union with Austria. Such a union would bring the German frontier right up to the Italian, and Mussolini does not fancy this nearness of his brother fascist of Germany.

Central Europe is a heaving mass of petty nations suffering in the grip of the slump and from the after effects of the World War, and now thoroughly upset and frightened by Hitler and his Nazis. In all these Central European countries, and especially where there are Germans or Fentons, as in Austria, Nazi parties are growing. But anti-Nazi feeling is also growing and the result is conflict. Austria is at present the chief field for this conflict.

Some time back in 1932, I think, the three pro-French States of Central Europe and the Danube area—

Czecho-Slovakia, Rumania and Yugo-Slavia—formed a union or alliance. All these three States had profited by the World War settlement and they wanted to keep what they had got. For this purpose they have joined together and formed what is in reality an alliance for war. This is called the “Little *Entente*”. This Little *Entente* comprising the three States practically forms a new Great Power in Europe, and it is a Power which is pro-French and anti-German and opposed to Italian policy also.

The triumph of the Nazis in Germany was a danger signal to the Little *Entente* as well as to Poland, for the Nazis not only wanted a revision of the Versailles Peace Treaty (all Germans wanted this) but talked in terms which seemed to bring war near. So aggressive and violent was the Nazi language and other tactics that even such States as wanted a treaty revision, like Austria and Hungary, got frightened. As a result of Hitlerism and in fear of it, all the States of Central Europe and the East which had so far bitterly hated each other, drew nearer to one another—the Little *Entente*, Poland, Austria, Hungary and the Balkan States. There has even been talk of an economic union between them. These countries, and notably Poland and Czecho-Slovakia, have also become more friendly towards Soviet Russia since the Nazi eruption in Germany. A consequence of this was the general non-aggression pact signed between them and Russia some weeks ago.

Spain, as I have told you, has recently had a revolution. It cannot settle down and seems to hover on the brink of another change.

So you see what a curious chequer-board Europe is at present with its conflicts and hates, and rival groups of nations glaring at each other. There is interminable talk of disarmament and yet everywhere there is arming going on and new and terrible weapons of war and destruction are being invented. There is also plenty of talk of international co-operation and conferences without number have been held. All to little purpose. The

League of Nations itself is a pitiful failure, and the last effort to pull together at the World Economic Conference has also come and gone with no success. There is a proposal that the various countries of Europe, or rather Europe without Russia should join together to form a kind of United States of Europe. The "Pan-Europe" movement this is called and it is really an effort to form an anti-Soviet *bloc* as well as to get over the innumerable difficulties and tangles due to such a large number of little nations. But national hates are far too powerful for anyone to pay attention to such a proposal.

In reality each country is drifting further apart from the others. The slump and world crisis have quickened this process by pushing all countries along the lines of economic nationalism. Each sits behind high tariff barriers and tries to keep out as far as possible foreign goods. It cannot of course keep out all foreign goods because no country is self-sufficient, that is, producing everything it requires. But the tendency is for it to grow or manufacture everything it needs. Some essential articles it may not be able to grow because of its climate. For instance England cannot grow cotton or jute or tea or coffee and so many other articles which require a warmer climate. This means that in future trade will be largely confined between countries having different climates and therefore growing and making different articles. Countries manufacturing the same type of articles will have little use for each other's goods. Thus trade will go north and south and not east and west, for climates vary north and south. A tropical country may deal with a temperate or cold country, but not two tropical countries with each other, or two temperate countries. Of course there may be other considerations also, such as the mineral resources of a country. But in the main the north and south considerations will apply to international trade. All other trade will be stopped by tariff barriers.

This seems to be an inevitable tendency to-day. It is called the final phase in the industrial revolution when

each country is sufficiently industrialised. It is true that Asia and Africa are far from industrialised yet. Africa is too backward and too poor to absorb manufactured goods in any quantity. The three large areas which might continue to absorb such foreign goods are: India, China and Siberia. Foreign industrial countries are looking eagerly towards these three huge potential markets. Having been cut off from many of their usual markets they are thinking of this 'push towards Asia' in order to dispose of their surplus goods and thus prop up their tottering capitalism. But it is not so easy to exploit Asia now, partly because of the development of Asiatic industries, and partly because of international rivalry. England wants to keep India as a market for her own goods, but Japan and the United States and Germany want a look in also. So also in China; and to add to this is her present disturbed state and want of proper communications which make trade difficult. Soviet Russia is prepared to take quite a lot of manufactured goods from abroad if she is given credit and not asked to pay for them immediately. But very soon the Soviet Union will make almost all it requires.

The whole past tendency has been towards greater inter-dependence between nations, a greater internationalism. Even though separate independent national States remained, an enormous and intricate structure of international relations and trade grew up. This process went so far as to conflict with the national States and with nationalism itself. The next natural step was a socialised international structure. Capitalism having had its day had reached the stage when it was time for it to retire in favour of socialism. But unhappily such a voluntary retirement never takes place. Because crisis and collapse threatened it, it has withdrawn into its shell and tried to reverse the past tendency towards inter-dependence. Hence economic nationalism. The question is if this can succeed, and even if it does for how long?

The whole world is a strange mix-up, a terrible

tangle of conflicts and jealousies, and the new tendencies but increase the field of these conflicts. In every continent, in every country, the weak and the oppressed want to share in the good things of life which they themselves help to produce. They claim payment of their debt, long overdue to them. In some places they are doing so loudly and harshly and aggressively; in other places more quietly. Can we blame them if, angry and bitter at the treatment and exploitation they have been subjected to for so long, they act in a manner we do not like? They were ignored and looked down upon; no one took the trouble to teach them drawing room manners!

This upheaval of the weak and the oppressed frightens the possessing classes everywhere and they band themselves together to suppress it. And thus fascism grows and imperialism crushes all opposition. The fine phrases about democracy and the people's good and trusteeship retire into the background and the naked rule of the possessing classes, vested interests, becomes more obvious, and in many places it seems to meet with triumph. A harsher age appears, an age of iron and aggressive violence, for everywhere the fight is one of life and death between the old order and the new. Everywhere, whether it is in Europe or America or India, the stakes are high and the fate of the old régime hangs in the balance, even though for the moment it may be strongly entrenched. Partial reform does meet or solve the problems of the day when the whole imperialist-capitalist system is shaken up to its foundation and cannot even meet its liabilities or the demands made upon it.

All these innumerable conflicts, political, economic, racial, darken the world to-day and carry the shadow of war with them. It is said that the greatest of these conflicts, the most fundamental of them, is the one between imperialism and fascism on the one side and communism on the other. These face each other all over the world and between them there is no room for

compromise.

Feudalism, capitalism, socialism, syndicalism, anarchism, communism—so many isms! And behind them all stalks opportunism! But there is also idealism for those who care to have it; not the idealism of empty fancies and an imagination run riot, but the idealism of working for a great human purpose, a great ideal which we seek to make real. Somewhere George Bernard Shaw has said:

“This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognised by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of nature, instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.”

Our incursions in history have shown us how the world has grown more and more compact, how different parts have come together and become inter-dependent. The world has indeed become one single inseparable whole, each part influencing and being influenced by the other. It is quite impossible now to have a separate history of nations. We have outgrown that stage and only a single world history, connecting the different threads from all the nations, and seeking to find the real forces that move them, can now be written with any useful purpose.

Even in past times, when nations were cut off from each other by many physical and other barriers, we have seen how common, international and inter-continental, forces shaped them. Great individuals have always counted in history for the human factor is important in every crisis of destiny; but greater than any individual are the mighty forces at work which, almost blindly and sometimes cruelly, forge ahead, pushing us hither and thither.

So it is to-day with us. Mighty forces are at work moving the hundreds of millions of human beings, and they go ahead like an earthquake or some other upheaval of nature. We cannot stop them however much we

may try, and yet one may, in our own little corner of the world, make some slight difference to them in speed or direction. According to our different temperaments we meet them—some frightened by them, others welcoming them, some trying to combat them, others submitting helplessly to the heavy hands of fate, while others still try to ride the tempest and control it a little and direct it, willingly facing the perils that this involves for the joy of helping actively in a mighty process.

There is no peace for us in this turbulent twentieth century, a third of which has already passed with its full complement of war and revolution. "The whole world is in revolution," says the great Fascist, Mussolini, "Events themselves are a tremendous force pushing us on like some implacable will." And the great Communist, Trotsky, also warns us of this century not to expect too much of peace and comfort. "It is clear", he says, "that the twentieth century is the most disturbed century within the memory of humanity. Any contemporary of ours who wants peace and comfort before everything else has chosen a bad time to be born."

The whole world is in labour and the shadow of war and revolution lies heavy everywhere. If we cannot escape from this inevitable destiny of ours, how shall we face it? Ostrich-like, shall we hide our heads from it? Or shall we play a brave part in the shaping of events and, facing risks and perils if need be, have the joy of great and noble adventure, and the feeling that our "steps are merging with those of history"?

All of us, or at any rate those who think, are looking forward expectantly to the future as it unrolls itself and becomes the present. Some await the outcome with hope, others with fear. Will it be a fairer and a happier world where the good things of life will not be reserved for a few but are freely to be enjoyed by the masses? Or a harsher world than even to-day from which many of the amenities of present day civilization have gone after fierce and destructive wars? These are two extremes. Either may occur, it seems improbable that

a middle course will prevail.

While we wait and watch, we work for the kind of world we would like to have. Man has not progressed from his brute stage by helpless submission to the ways of nature, but often by a defiance of them and a desire to dominate them for human advantage.

Such is To-day. The making of Tomorrow lies with you and your generation, the millions of girls and boys all over the world who are growing up and training themselves to take part in this Tomorrow.

THE LAST LETTER

August 9, 1933

We have finished, my dear; long story has ended. I need write no more, but the desire to end off with a kind of flourish induces me to write another letter—the Last Letter!

It was time I finished for the end of my two year term draws near. In three and thirty days from to-day I should be discharged, if indeed I am not released sooner, as the jailer sometimes threatens to do. The full two years are not over yet but I have received three and a half months' remission of my sentence, as all well-behaved prisoners do. For I am supposed to be a well-behaved prisoner, a reputation which I have certainly done nothing to deserve. So ends my sixth sentence and I shall go out again into the wide world, but to what purpose? *A quoi bon?* When most of my friends and comrades lie in jail and the whole country seems a vast prison.

What a mountain of letters I have written! And what a lot of good *swadeshi* ink I have spread out on *swadeshi* paper. Was it worthwhile, I wonder? Will all this paper and ink convey any message to you that will interest you? You will say yes of course, for you will feel that any other answer might hurt me, and you are too partial to me to take such a risk. But whether you care for them or not, you cannot grudge me the joy of having written them, day after day, during these two long years. It was winter when I came. Winter gave place to our brief spring, slain all too soon by the summer heat; and then when the ground was parched and dry and men and beasts panted for breath, came the

monsoon with its bountiful supply of fresh and cool rain water. Autumn followed, and the sky was wonderfully clear and blue and the afternoons were pleasant. The year's cycle was over, and again it began: winter and spring and summer and the rainy season. I have sat here, writing to you and thinking of you, and watched the seasons go by, and listened to the pitapat of the rain on my barrack roof—

*"O doux bruit de la pluie,
Par terre et sur les toits!
Pour un coeur qui s'ennuie,
Oh! le chant de la pluie!"**

Benjamin Disraeli, the great English Statesman of the nineteenth century, has written that: "Other men condemned to exile and captivity, if they survive, despair; the man of letters may reckon those days as the sweetest of his life." He was writing about Hugo Grotius, a famous Dutch jurist and philosopher of the seventeenth century, who was condemned to imprisonment for life but managed to escape after two years. He spent these two years in prison in philosophic and literary work. There have been many famous literary gaol-birds, the two best known perhaps being the Spaniard, Cervantes, who wrote *Don Quixote*, and the Englishman, John Bunyan, the author of *The Pilgrim's progress*.

I am not a man of letters and I am not prepared to say that the many years I have spent in jail have been the sweetest in my life, but I must say that reading and writing have helped me wonderfully to get through them. I am not a literary man, and I am not a historian; what indeed am I? I find it difficult to answer that question. I have been a dabbler in many things; I began with science at college and then took to the law

*O soft sound of rain
On earth and on the roofs
For a heart that is pining
Oh! the song of the rain.

and, after developing various other interests in life, finally adopted the popular and widely-practised profession of jail-going in India!

You must not take what I have written in these letters as the final authority on any subject. A politician wants to have a say on every subject, and he always pretends to know much more than he actually does. He has to be watched carefully! These letters of mine are but superficial sketches joined together by a thin thread. I have rambled on, skipping centuries and many important happenings, and then pitching my tent for quite a long time on some event which interested me. As you will notice, my likes and dislikes are pretty obvious, and so also sometimes are my moods in jail. I do not want you to take all this for granted; there may indeed be many errors in my accounts. A prison, with no libraries or reference books at hand, is not the most suitable place to write on historical subjects. I have had to rely very largely on the many note-books which I have accumulated since I began my visits to jail twelve years ago. Many books have also come to me here; they have come and gone for I could not collect a library here. I have shamelessly taken from these books facts and ideas; there is nothing original in what I have written. Perhaps occasionally you may find my letters difficult to follow; skip those parts, do not mind them. The grown-up in me got the better of me sometimes and I wrote as I should not have done.

I have given you the barest outline; this is not history; they are just fleeting glimpses of our long past. If history interests you, if you feel some of the fascination of history, you will find your way to many books which will help you to unravel the threads of past ages. But reading books alone will not help. If you would know the past you must look upon it with sympathy and with understanding. To understand a person who lived long ago, you will have to understand his environment, the conditions under which he lived, the ideas that filled his mind. It is absurd for us to judge of past

world.

Great Empires have risen and fallen and been forgotten by man for thousands of years, till their remains were dug up again by patient explorers from under the sands that covered them. And yet many an idea, many a fancy, has survived and proved stronger and more persistent than the Empire.

"Egypt's might is tumbled down
Down a-down the deeps of thought;
Greece is fallen and Troy town,
Glorious Rome hath lost her crown,
Venice's pride is nought.
But the dreams their children dreamed
Fleeting, unsubstantial, vain,
Shadowy as the shadows seemed,
Airy nothing, as they deemed,
These remain."

So sings Mary Coleridge.

The past brings us many gifts; indeed all that we have to-day of culture, civilization, science or knowledge of some aspects of the truth, is a gift of the distant or recent past to us. It is right that we acknowledge our obligation to the past. But the past does not exhaust our duty or obligation. We owe a duty to the future also and perhaps that obligation is even greater than the one we owe to the past. For the past is past and done with, we cannot change it; the future is yet to come and perhaps we may be able to shape it a little. If the past has given us some part of the truth, the future also hides many aspects of the truth and invites us to search for it. But often the past is jealous of the future and holds us in a terrible grip, and we have to struggle with it to get free to face and advance towards the future.

History, it is said, has many lessons to teach us; and there is another saying that history never repeats itself. Both are true, for we cannot learn anything from it by slavishly trying to copy it, or by expecting it to repeat itself or remain stagnant; but we can learn something from it by prying behind it and trying to discover the forces that move it. Even so what we get

is seldom a straight answer. "History", says Karl Marx, "has no other way of answering old questions than by putting new ones."

The old days were days of faith, blind, unquestioning faith. The wonderful temples and mosques and cathedrals of past centuries could never have been built but for the overpowering faith of the architects and builders and people generally. The very stones they reverently put one on top of the other, or carved in beautiful designs, tell us of this faith. The old temple spire, the mosque with its slender minarets, the Gothic cathedral—all of them pointing upward with our amazing intensity of devotion, as if offering a prayer in stone or marble to the sky above—thrill us even now though we may be lacking in that faith of old of which they are the embodiments. But the days of that faith are gone, and gone with them is that magic touch in stone. Thousands of temples and mosques and cathedrals continue to be built but they lack the spirit that made them live during the Middle Ages. There is little difference between them and the commercial offices which are so representative of our age.

Our age is a different one; it is an age of disillusion, of doubt and uncertainty and questioning. We can no longer accept many of the ancient beliefs and customs; we have no more faith in them, in Asia or in Europe or America. So we search for new ways, new aspects of the truth more in harmony with our environment. And we question each other and debate and quarrel and evolve any number of 'isms' and philosophies. As in the days of Socrates, we live in an age of questioning, but that questioning is not confined to a city like Athens; it is world-wide.

Sometimes the injustice, the unhappiness, the brutality of the world oppresses us and darkens our minds, and we see no way out. With Mathew Arnold, we feel that there is no hope in this world and all we can do is to be true to one another.

"For the world which seems
To lie before us, like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here, as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night."

And yet if we take such a dismal view we have not learnt aright the lesson of life or of history. For history teaches us of growth and progress and of the possibility of an infinite advance for man. And life is rich and varied, and though it has many swamps and marshes and muddy places, it has also the great sea, and the mountains, and snow, and glaciers, and wonderful starlit nights (especially in jail!), and the love of family and friends, and the comradeship of workers in a common cause, and music, and books and the Empire of ideas. So that each one of us may well say:

"Lord, though I lived on earth, the child of earth,
Yet was I fathered by the starry sky."

It is easy to admire the beauties of the universe and to live in a world of thought and imagination. But to try to escape in this way from the unhappiness of others, caring little what happens to them, is no sign of courage or fellow-feeling. Thought, in order to justify itself, must lead to action. "Action is the end of thought", says our friend Romain Rolland, "All thought which does not look towards action is an abortion and a treachery. If then we are the servants of thought we must be the servants of action."

People avoid action often because they are afraid of the consequences, for action means risk and danger. Danger seems terrible from a distance; it is not so bad if you have a close look at it. And often it is a pleasant companion, adding to the zest and delight of life. The ordinary course of life becomes dull at times and we take too many things for granted and have no joy in them. And yet how we appreciate these common things of life when we have lived without them for a while! Many

people go up high mountains and risk life and limb for the joy of the climb and the exhilaration that comes from a difficulty surmounted, a danger overcome; and because of the danger that hovers all around them, their perceptions get keener, their joy of the life which hangs by a thread, the more intense.

All of us have their choice of living in the valleys below with their unhealthy mists and fogs but giving a measure of bodily security; or of climbing the high mountains, with risk and danger for companions, to breathe the pure air above, and take joy in the distant views, and welcome the rising sun.

I have given you many quotations and extracts from poets and others in this letter. I shall finish up with one more. It is from the Gitanjali; it is a poem, or prayer, by Rabindra Nath Tagore:

“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by
narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into
the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening
thought and action—
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country
awake.

We have finished, *carissima*, and this last letter ends. The last letter! Certainly not! I shall write you many more. But this series ends, and so

Tamām Shud!

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